

Jordan Times

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UAE says Yinhe must be checked

DUBAI (R) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is demanding to check the cargo of a Chinese ship believed to be carrying Iran-bound chemical weapons materials before allowing its transshipment to Iran, shipping sources said Tuesday. Washington says the cargo ship Yinhe is carrying banned chemical weapons additives among its cargo but Beijing says it has only paper goods, hardware and machine parts on board. The Yinhe, which is being shadowed by U.S. Navy ships, has asked permission to enter a UAE port and anchored on Monday "just on the edge" of UAE territorial waters, shipping sources said. Most of the 2,500 containers it is carrying are not bound for Iran. Some 560 were destined for off-loading in Dubai and some of these are bound for transshipment to Iran. "Checking the containers is a main UAE demand if the ship is allowed to unload its cargo here," a well-placed shipping official said. "The Yinhe asked the UAE permission to enter Khor Fakkan or Fujairah ports last night. An answer was due around noon (0800 GMT) but a decision has not been taken yet. It is a political decision," he added. The two UAE ports are on the Gulf of Oman just outside the Gulf. The Yinhe arrived in the region on Aug. 2.

3 Palestinians, Israeli wounded in Gaza

GAZA CITY, occupied Gaza Strip (AFP) — Two Palestinian children and a youth were shot and wounded and an Israeli soldier was attacked with an axe Tuesday in the occupied Gaza Strip, Palestinian sources said. Soldiers posted on a camp rooftop opened fire in the direction of young stone-throwers, wounding two children aged eight and 11, witnesses said. In another incident, a group of five masked Palestinians were taken by surprise by an Israeli patrol in the Rafah refugee camp. One of the Palestinians attacked an Israeli soldier with an axe. Four of the Palestinians ran away, but the fifth, shot and wounded by the Israelis, was captured. An Israeli military spokesman confirmed the soldier had been injured. The incidents occurred as the Gaza Strip and West Bank were paralysed by a strike called by the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas. Hamas calls for a strike on the 17th of every month to mark the expulsion to Lebanon on Dec. 17 of 415 Palestinians suspected of membership in the organization and the Islamic Jihad movement (see page 2).

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Election Law changed to one-person, one-vote

King, in ratifying government decision, says change was constitutional necessity

'We do not support one side over another'
'Do not fail to exercise your right to vote'
IAF should live up to its responsibilities



His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday chairs a meeting of the Council of Ministers at the Prime Ministry. To the King's right are Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Information Ma'an Abu Nowar and to the King's left are Royal Court Chief Khaled Al Karaki, and Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Jawad Al Anani (Photo by Yasney Floyd)

Minister of Information Ma'an Abu Nowar and to the King's left are Royal Court Chief Khaled Al Karaki, and Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Jawad Al Anani (Photo by Yasney Floyd)

that will be the model for the trust that unites us."

Following is the full text of the King's address:

In the name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful. Prayers and peace be upon the faithful Arab Hashemite Prophet

Fellow citizens,

PEACE be upon you. I greet you all, young and old, men,

women and children, for whose sake we work hard, and for the sake of generations to follow. Our work stems from our sense of duty and the fear of the Almighty Allah; in our effort to seek Allah's graciousness; our objective is to be conscientious until the day we die, with our good deeds as we stand among the God-fearing and the virtuous, rather than with the hypocrites who withhold truth and are fearful of confronting the oppression of evil.

I greet you, my family, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, wherever you may be; in the cities and the villages, in the badia as well as in the hills, in the Jordan Valley and in Aqaba. I salute all soldiers in our Arab Hashemite Jordanian Forces, steadfast on the pure land, which is bedecked with the heritage of our forefathers, and filled with

the tombs of our martyrs. I greet you wherever you are in this world, where you are keeping the peace with other honourable colleagues, striving, as you do, to rescue the weak from injustice, the poor from hunger, and the free from tyranny and despotism, saving humanity from tyranny, spite, and darkness.

I greet you boys and girls, in the schools of Jordan and abroad, as you prepare yourselves for the challenges of life that lie ahead, and in the building of a stronger Jordan. I am proud of you, and proud of being one of you as a Hashemite Arab Jordanian who has lived amongst you for forty years, in both good times and bad. We have always defended and will continue to defend the nation against the greedy and the spiteful. Jordan has always been in a critical position similar to a precious stone, the pressure of events only adds to its glitter and shine. Jordan today is inheriting the best of the nation: Chivalry and resolve, freedom, credibility and martyrdom. From this podium I call upon each and every one of you, myself included, to ensure that this flame is kept alive. This is our national and historical responsibility and I say to you that each one of us should be conscious of the repercussions that would result from the success or failure of our mission.

Our homeland is a good model in that its people, regardless of their origin, agree to support and uphold its honourable mission: The betterment and protection of the individual, the achievement of freedom and justice securing a stability of life based on the respect and protection of the constitution. Upholding the spirit of democracy or Shura, call it what you may, is embodied in your National Charter which aims to achieve political pluralism. It is only a matter of time before political ranks are organised into two, three or four parties encompassing well-studied and convincing programmes, within the con-

Amendment only affects two articles in 1986 law

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The introduction of the one-person, one-vote amendment into the electoral system is the only change that the draft temporary Election Law approved by His Majesty, King Hussein, has introduced to the election process.

The draft provided legislation, which will be introduced upon public debate in the official gazette, amended from R of Article 16 and Article 17 of the Election Law to say that voters have the right to choose one candidate only. The two arti-

cles had originally given voters the right to elect more than one candidate.

Before amendment, from R of Article 16 of the Election Law read: "The voter has to write the names of candidates that he or she wishes to elect on the ballot. In the draft temporary legislation, it says the voter is to write the name of the candidate that he or she wants to elect on the ballot."

Article 17 had read: "If a ballot included the names of more candidates than the number of electors that should be elected, the additional names will be deleted." It said that it

any of "the names of candidates were not written clearly but there were sufficient pointers to the name of the candidates elected, these names will be counted." The new article replaces "names" and "candidates" with "name" and "candidate."

The new electoral system is expected to work against large and well-organised political groups which benefited from the old bloc voting system through alliances involving mutual support with independent candidates.

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Opponents say they will contest temporary legislation in court

Parties, politicians still studying boycott of polls

By Nermeen Murad
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Opponents of the new Election Law that was adopted yesterday strongly attacked the government of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali saying they will contest the new provisional law in court and may end up boycotting the Nov. 8 elections en masse.

At a meeting they held Tuesday morning in anticipation of the announcement on changing the law, representatives from various political parties and parliamentary groups said they are pressing ahead with plans

to contest the constitutionality of the new temporary law and would meet again next week to follow up on a proposal to boycott the elections.

Former Amman Deputy Faris Nabulsi said if the opposition decides to "fight the elections," they might do so on a joint ticket which would cover the Kingdom's 20 voting zones.

"We will first take this case to court," said Mr. Nabulsi, who attended the meeting. "We will also decide whether to fight the elections on joint tickets."

The meeting, which was organised by and took place at

former Deputy Laith Shehailat's house, was attended by representatives of the Jordanian Baath Arab Socialist Party, the Jordanian Popular Unity Party, the Islamic Action Front (IAF) party, the Democratic Party for Progress in Jordan, the Jordanian Socialist Democratic Party, the Jordan People's Democratic Party, the Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party, Yakhda Party, and the Arab Baath Progressive Party as well as several independent political personalities.

Mr. Nabulsi, who spoke to

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Resistance attacks Israeli-allied group

MARJAYOUN (Agencies) — Resistance fighters launched their fiercest attack against Israel's unilateral "security zone" Tuesday since a ceasefire halted an Israeli blitz of South Lebanon last month, security sources said.

They said Hizbollah (Party of God) guerrillas first fired anti-tank rockets and mortar bombs at three posts of Israel's surrogate South Lebanon Army (SLA) militias on the edge of the zone.

The guerrillas then advanced to some 300 metres from the posts and exchanged machinegun fire and rocket-propelled grenades with SLA militiamen, the sources said.

There were no reports of casualties.

They said SLA gunners retaliated, shelling a guerrilla-held area to the north.

Hours later, Israeli planes staged mock raids over Iqim Al Toufah ridge, a Hizbollah stronghold, drawing anti-aircraft

Peace talks delayed by one day; Rabin sees 'historic' year

AMMAN (Agencies) — The 11th round of Middle East peace talks will start in Washington on Aug. 31, instead of Aug. 30 as originally planned, a Jordanian official said Tuesday.

He told Reuters that the Arabs asked Russia and the United States, co-sponsors of the peace process, to move the date back by one day to avoid clashing with national Muslim holidays marking the birth anniversary of the Prophet Mohammad.

He said the talks, between Israel and Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Palestinians, would last for two weeks.

Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi said in occupied Jerusalem, the Arabs could not attend the bilateral negotiations on the holy day.

"Israel has confirmed it will take part in the talks to the

Libya ready to discuss trial in Britain or U.S.

TRIPOLI (Agencies) — Libya said Tuesday it was prepared to discuss the possibility that two Libyans accused of blowing up a U.S. airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988 could be tried in Britain or the United States.

Foreign Minister Omar Al Muntaser told the French news agency (AFP) the two men "have the right to turn themselves over to whomever they want and Libya is prepared to discuss this topic with a representative of the U.N. Security Council or of the U.N. secretary general."

"Libya does not rule out the participation of any country in these talks, if they take place, even including Britain or the United States."

Libya had to date insisted that Abdul Baset Al Megrahi and Al Amin Khalifa Fhima be tried in a "neutral" country, thereby excluding Britain and the United States.

Mr. Muntaser emphasised that his country could not extradite

Libya ready to discuss trial in Britain or U.S.

the two men without their consent and that they must be convinced about going on trial in Britain or the U.S.

"Libyan laws bar Libyan authorities from extraditing their citizens," he stressed.

He said that during a meeting earlier this month with U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali he had voiced Libya's readiness to discuss measures regarding the venue for the trial but none had been set.

The minister said he also proposed to Dr. Ghali that the latter send a mission to Libya to ascertain it did not shelter "terrorist" training camps.

He declined to comment on a warning on Friday by Washington, London and Paris setting Oct. 1 as a deadline to hand over the two suspects, short of which they would seek the U.N. Security Council's reinforcement of sanctions slapped on Libya on

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Palestinian resignation crisis part of a larger and deeper problem

By Lamis K. Andoni
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

THE SHORT-LIVED crisis over the resignations of three prominent Palestinian negotiators, which was swiftly contained by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leadership last week, has triggered a serious debate over the Palestinian negotiating strategy — or, in the view of many, the lack of it — towards the Middle East peace process.

In the opinion of many analysts, PLO officials and even delegation members, the crisis was reduced to a power struggle that overshadowed political differences over what is viewed as "consecutive concessions by the leadership" and political and organisational reforms in the movement.

In fact, reports from the Israeli-occupied territories sug-

gest that political differences and debate have intensified inside the circles of the leadership, particularly within the delegation members, especially after the revelations that Faisal Hussein had prior knowledge about, or took part in, the formulation of the Palestinian response to the American proposal for Palestinian self-rule. This supposedly was the main reason that prompted Mr. Hussein and two of his colleagues, Hanan Ashrawi and Saeb Erakat, to submit their resignations.

The disclosure of Mr. Hussein's knowledge of the controversial response was made by PLO Executive Committee member Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) at last week's meeting between the leadership and a number of delegation's members in Tunis, according to PLO officials and

Palestinian negotiators. Many members of the Palestinian delegation, according to different sources in Amman, Tunis and the occupied territories, were angered by the revelations particularly that it confirmed previous doubts that the majority of the negotiators are "kept in the dark" about what the leadership "is up to."

Statements made by some negotiators, especially supporters of the mainstream Fateh faction, indicate that the whole episode has sharpened the polarisation inside the delegation into two camps led by Mr. Hussein and chief negotiator Haidar Abdul Shafi.

The focus of political differences between the two leaders, which were manifested in many public statements over the last four months, now seems to be on whether to

accept or reject the Israeli proposal of early empowerment, Palestinian officials say. But the issue is further complicated by the fact that after the Israeli approval of Mr. Hussein as member of the negotiating team the Palestinian delegation practically has two heads — Mr. Hussein and Dr. Abdul Shafi — with two different political lines.

In interviews with Israel Television Sunday some Palestinian negotiators implied deep differences with Mr. Hussein. "If I were (Yasser) Arafat I would dissolve the delegation and form a new one under the leadership of Dr. Abdul Shafi," Freih Abu Medien, who is a supporter of Fateh, told Israel Television. It was a sign that the crisis is far from over in spite of the leadership's decision to appoint a number of negotiators including Dr.

Abdul Shafi and Mr. Hussein in the senior steering committee in the PLO that is supposed to draft negotiating strategies.

The appointments, which in theory yielded a bigger say to the delegation in the decision-making process, were doubtless a successful tactic by the PLO leadership to turn the crisis into its favour by asserting its role and challenging both the U.S. and Israel to come to terms with the organisation as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people (See story from the occupied territories on page 4).

Yet, despite the importance of asserting the PLO role in the peace process, Palestinian supporters and opponents of the ongoing talks with Israel alike say there are serious fears that such gains could prove meaningless if the leadership accepts substantive conces-

sions — as it is argued by many inside and outside the delegation and the organisation itself.

The immediate concern for many Palestinian negotiators, according to interviews and press reports from the occupied territories, seems to be that the Tunis meeting has not altered the de facto Palestinian acceptance of some elements in the American proposal in contradiction with the official decision to formulate a Palestinian response based on international resolutions and laws.

Although the PLO has not accepted the American proposals in full, and instead presented a paper including many modifications and new ideas, the fact that the Palestinian response is largely based on the American proposal could undermine Palestinian efforts to maintain United Nations resolutions 242 and 338 the basis

of all the phases of the negotiating process.

The American proposal, which was suggested as a common ground between the Israelis and the Palestinians to start negotiations, states that any agreement between the two sides will constitute the implementation of Resolution 242 and insists that the status of East Jerusalem be deferred to the final stage of the negotiations.

The major Palestinian reservation over the American paper emanates from fear that the paper could replace the United Nations resolutions, international law and even the American letters of assurances, according to which the parties involved agreed to participate in the current talks, as the term of reference for all the

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Circassians are split over one-person, one-vote formula

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Political opinions in the Circassian community, a minority of about 45,000 to 50,000 which is allotted 20 seats in the 80-seat Lower House of Parliament, appear split over the newly enacted one-person, one-vote formula, with one side viewing it as an opportunity to elect the choice of the majority, and the other seeing it as a threat to national unity.

According to the 1986 Election Law, voters could choose a number of candidates equal to the seats assigned for each constituency. The one-person, one-vote scheme, however, gives each voter the right to cast only one vote, thus limiting the swapping or doubling of the weight of votes.

The majority of eligible voters in the Circassian community are not affiliated with Jordan's legalised parties. That is why supporters of the new formula maintain that one-person, one-vote would mean that a concentrating of their voting power would bring to Parliament the choice of the majority rather than Islamists and other politically-affiliated Circassians.

"The two deputies representing the Circassian community, Mansour Murad and Dawood Quijuq, were not elected by us, but by leftists and Muslim Brotherhood voters," said Jaw-

dat Nashkhoo, a Circassian journalist.

Mr. Murad, an ex-member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and Dawood Quijuq, a Muslim Brotherhood member, were elected to the two Circassian seats in Parliament in the 1989 election. Many Circassians believe that the two deputies benefited from the votes of non-Circassians.

Former House deputy Quijuq opposes the one-person, one-vote system and agrees that the Muslim Brotherhood and the leftists won the Circassian seats in the 1989 election mainly because of "the non-Circassian voters."

In the third and fifth constituencies, where Mrs. Murad and Mr. Quijuq won their seats, each voter had five votes. This factor gave non-Circassians an opportunity to vote for Circassian candidates in addition to other candidates. Thus the strategy of swapping votes led to determining the winners.

Mr. Quijuq told the Jordan Times that "with the new (one-person, one-vote) law political parties will find it difficult to win minority seats."

All Kassay, a Circassian scholar, supported Mr. Nashkhoo's argument that it was non-Circassian voters who brought Murad and Quijuq to Parliament. He added that "the Circassians would have a golden opportunity to elect candidates from their

own camp."

Those who reject the one-person, one-vote system do so on national grounds. They believe that the Circassian deputies represent not only their community, but the nation as a whole. Therefore, they maintain, non-Circassian voters should be eligible to elect Circassian candidates as well. They add that this right would not be possible under the one-person, one-vote formula.

"The new law will weaken national unity and turn Jordan into ghettos with each voter seeking good for his community, not the country," said Toujan Faisal, a Circassian and leading feminist who ran unsuccessfully in the 1989 election.

According to Ms. Faisal, the law will make each citizen think of his/her own community and thus open the gates wide to the disintegration of the Jordanian society. "The law will give tribes and clans advantages to decide the winners of the coming election and draw the future of the country on communal grounds; we should prevent them from fishing in troubled waters," warned Ms. Faisal.

Samir Hussein, a Circassian shopkeeper, believed that amending the current law would create barriers between Jordanians. "The criteria for voting would become whether the candidate belongs to my community or not, so community wins and Jordan suffers," he said.

Jordan wins international award for fight against illiteracy

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan has won the 1992 international award for its significant achievements in the eradication of illiteracy.

The announcement was made by Minister of Education Khaled Al Omari who said that the award, worth \$30,000 in cash, was presented by South Korea to Jordan through the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

UNESCO organised the programme which assessed the efforts of various countries in their fight against illiteracy.

Mr. Ahmad Sous, Director of the Ministry of Education's Adult Education Department said strenuous efforts over the past 30 years have yielded very successful results.

Illiteracy in Jordan stood at 67.7 per cent in 1961, but dropped to 15.3 per cent in 1992, noted Mr. Sous.

Over the past 30 years the ministry's adult education programmes have provided education to 200,000 people in Jordan, he said.

The ministry is attempting to eradicate illiteracy by the year 2000, he added.

Meanwhile, the ministry Tuesday opened a week-long training seminar on illiteracy and adult education in the Israeli-occupied Arab lands.

The seminar, organised in cooperation with the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) Department for Higher Education in Amman, the Arab League Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ALESCO) and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation is being attended by 27 education supervisors working in the occupied territories.

Opening the seminar, Ministry Secretary General Munther Al Masri announced that Jordan plans to develop the education process and eliminate illiteracy which, he said, could fall to eight per cent by the end of the present century.

The education system of the occupied Arab lands is still following the Ministry of Education in Amman despite 1988 severance of administrative and legal ties.

Mr. Ibrahim Al Aqeb, representative of the ALESCO said that Israel was continually depriving Palestinian people of the right to an education.

If Israel aims at destroying our self-confidence and our culture driving us to further despair, frustration and loss of our culture and heritage, we ought to confront the challenge by finding new methods of strengthening our national and cultural identity, said Mr. Aqeb.

Mauritanian foreign minister ends visit

AMMAN (Petra) — Mauritanian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Mohammed Abdul Rahman Weld Amin Tuesday left Amman at the end of a three-day visit to Jordan, during which he met with His Majesty King Hussein and delivered a message from Mauritanian President Muawiyah Weld Sidi Al Tayfi and held talks with senior Jordanian officials.

In a departure statement, the Mauritanian minister praised the Jordanian-Mauritanian relations, saying that they are unique and reflect the aspirations of the leadership of both countries.

He added that he was pleased to have listened to an evaluation of the current situation in the region by King Hussein.

U.S. officials expected to arrive for talks on impact of sanctions

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — An official American delegation is expected to visit Jordan next month to review the impact of the international sanctions against Iraq on the Kingdom's economy, official sources said Tuesday.

The sources said the delegation, led by Ambassador David Newton, was being dispatched by the State Department in fulfilment of a pledge made by Secretary of State Warren Christopher during his visit to Jordan in August.

The dispatch of the delegation, which the sources said would make a "comprehensive" assessment of the Jordanian economy

in light of the sanctions against Iraq, is believed to be the first major step that Washington undertakes in response to repeated Jordanian appeals.

The mandatory sanctions, imposed by the U.N. Security Council after the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, deprived Jordan of its largest trading partner and crippled the Kingdom's port and transport sectors which used to cater mostly to Iraq-bound goods passing through the port of Aqaba.

Beyond that, however, is the direct and indirect impact of what Jordanian officials and shipping circles describe as the overzealous enforcement of the sanctions by U.S.-led warships patrolling the Red Sea, checking every freighter headed for and leaving Aqaba.

The inspection procedures have led to costly delays as well as higher freight rates, raising costs in the market as well as making it difficult for many industries to maintain production on schedule.

Mr. Christopher, after talks with His Majesty King Hussein Aug. 5 on the Middle East peace process, told a press conference that one of the bilateral issues raised during the discussions here was the impact on Jordan of the sanctions.

The secretary indicated that Washington would seek to ensure that the enforcement of the sanctions would be in an "even and fair" manner for Jordan.

According to the sources, Mr. Newton will be accompanied by other officials from the Pentagon as well as the Treasury Department.

"We expect the discussions to go beyond the enforcement of sanctions and deal with the economic problems that Jordan is facing as a result of the sanctions," said one of the sources.

Washington, which accused Jordan in early 1992 of allowing contraband goods to enter Iraq, now says that it is satisfied with the Kingdom's adherence to the embargo.

In his Aug. 5 comments, Mr. Christopher, who has written to the U.S. Congress that the Clinton administration takes seriously Jordanian assurances on enforcing the sanctions, voiced appreciation of the Kingdom's "effective enforcement" of the embargo.

Political parties demand end to sanctions on Iraq

AMMAN (Petra) — A group of 14 political parties Tuesday issued a statement demanding an end to the U.N.-imposed sanctions on Iraq and called on the Arab countries to reestablish solidarity among themselves in the face of common challenges.

The statement, issued by the Higher Coordination Committee for Jordanian Political Parties, said the starving of the Iraqi people should not be viewed separately from the ongoing attempts at liquidating the Palestinian issue and the current campaign to create a climate for world Zionism.

The statement, issued after a meeting with Saad Qasem Hammoudi, Secretary General of the Arab Popular Forces Congress

and an accompanying delegation, said discussions with the delegation centred on means of ending differences among Arab states, protecting the Arab Nation's wealth and safeguarding Arab national interests.

The statement called: — on all national political and Islamic groups to demand an end to the unjust embargo on Iraq because the starving of the Iraqi people is part of a plan to deprive the Arab Nation of food and culture and subject it to total humiliation.

— for the need to reestablish genuine solidarity among honest Arab peoples so that they can face common challenges together and confront dangers such as those facing Jordan, Lebanon,

Libya, the Palestinians, Sudan, Yemen and Somalia.

— for the support of Iraq and its latest agreement with the United Nations, which allows the lifting of sanctions in exchange for Iraq's implementation of U.N. resolutions.

— for promoting the Arab Popular Forces Congress to enhance the Arab Nation's march — for organising a congress meeting either in Morocco or Amman.

In their statement, the secretary generals of the 14 political parties paid tribute to Jordan for its pan-Arab efforts, its demand for an end to the embargo on the people of Iraq and for its continued support of the Palestinian people's intifada.

The statement also voiced full support for His Majesty King Hussein's endeavours to bring about a general reconciliation among Arab states.

Meanwhile, Mr. Hammoudi and his delegation met with the Speaker of the Upper House of Parliament, Ahmad Lawzi, and reviewed the delegation's discussions with the leaders of Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria and the Congress's effort to reestablish solidarity among Arab states.

Mr. Lawzi reiterated Jordan's keenness to preserve Iraq's unity and territorial integrity. Jordan, he said, stands firmly behind joint Arab efforts towards solidarity within the Arab League and in the implementation of its charter.

Amateur astronomers spot 90 meteors per hour

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Jordanian Amateur Astronomers Society (JAAS) last week organised a camping trip to Wadi Rum to monitor falling meteors. What they saw was close to what they predicted, but those who expected spectacular scenery were disappointed.

Society President Khalil Qunsul told the Jordan Times that the average of 90 per hour as was expected, but those astronomers who were awaiting major events like meteor storms and fireballs were disappointed to see hundreds rather than thousands of meteors.

The team of 47 society members and their supporters and friends saw 541 meteors and numerous fireballs of fantastic colours on the nights of August 11 and 12, but other astronomers around the world reported many more, noted Mr. Qunsul, who led the group to the Wadi Rum camp.

He said, the observation of the shower was interrupted by the lights of cars arriving at the camp site, the presence of the large noisy crowds of people disturbing the watchers and the bright light of the moon on these particular nights.

Normally the meteor stream becomes active around the middle of August each year, but this year expected unusually intense activity because of the appearance of the Comet Swift around which the meteors revolve, noted Mr. Qunsul.

He said meteors which were spotted at altitudes of 110

kilometres appeared and disappeared somewhat like fireworks with fantastic brightness and different colours.

Explaining the nature of meteors, Mr. Qunsul said they are masses of dust and gas collected together from passing comets which move very fast towards the earth and burn with a trail because of friction with the Earth's atmosphere.

Fireballs are of the same nature but are much brighter than meteors and are larger; but neither fireballs nor meteors normally reach the Earth.

According to Mr. Qunsul, JAAS was founded in 1987 and is financed by contributions and subscriptions. It conducts lectures and seminars and organises stargazing sessions nearly every week.

Each year the society organises trips to various regions of Jordan and trains new society members in astronomy-related fields, added Mr. Qunsul.

In September 1992 the society organised the first Arab Astronomers' Conference in Amman, held in cooperation with the University of Jordan.

The society publishes a weekly gazette featuring reports on new discoveries and astronomy-related news, according to Mr. Qunsul.

He said the society plans to hold a series of seminars and training courses for teachers and astronomy amateurs.

The society's headquarters are at the Haya Arts Centre in Shmeisani, where they have been using the centre's facilities including the telescope.

4 ambassadors to return to base

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet Tuesday decided to transfer four of Jordan's ambassadors from their foreign posts to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as of Oct. 1. They are ambassador to Egypt and permanent representative to the Arab League Nabih Al Nimr, ambassador to China Sameh Al Faraj, Ambassador to Australia Saad Bataineh and Ambassador to Morocco Adnan Al Talhouini.

At a session, chaired by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali, the cabinet endorsed several revised laws, including the Ministry of Industry and Trade Organisation regulation, the Yarmouk

University's Administrative and Technical Staff regulations and the Jordan Dentists' Health Insurance and Social Security Laws. Under the revised ministry of industry and trade regulation, Article C regarding requests for organising exhibitions inside and outside Jordan, has been amended to authorise the ministry to look into requests by foreign countries to hold exhibitions in Jordan and to approve such requests in accordance with the conditions set forth by the ministry.

Under the revised regulation of Yarmouk University's administrative and technical staff, the

recruitment officers concerned will be authorised to grant staff at the first, second and third grades leave without pay for a maximum of two years, upon the recommendation of the dean or the department director, provided that the person requesting the leave has worked for the university for five consecutive years without interruption.

Under the revised dentists health insurance and social security regulation, each member of the association must subscribe to the association's health insurance fund, unless that doctor subscribes to another fund.

Poverty, mentality said to be behind 'crimes of honour'

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — In what appears to be a new "crime of honour" a 25-year-old Jordanian shot his two sisters this week killing one and seriously injuring another. One expert on delinquent behaviour blames poor education and economic conditions; a women's activist points the finger at double standards in ethical issues.

This week's murder, which took place in Marka Al Janoubieh, involved the shooting of two sisters, Muna and Sana, 24 and 19, by their older brother. Security sources gave no further details of the murderer's motive except to say it "has something to do with (what the brother might have thought as) immoral behaviour of his sisters."

According to statistics arrived by the National Committee for Combating Crime (NCCC), which was established in 1986 and is composed of academicians, activists, politicians and senior police officers, murders committed in the name of family honour rose to 34.5 per cent of all killings in 1985 from 22 per cent in 1977.

The NCCC's study revealed that motives behind such crimes stem from the disintegration of family ties and the deterioration of the social infrastructure.

Sociologist Sabri Rubelhat attributed the rise in the number of honour crimes in the country to frustration affecting people when facing crises, which eventually lead them to perpetrate violent acts. He said the drastic socio-economic changes our society is facing are negatively influencing people's actions, driving them towards committing crimes.

"Our role must be that of investigating the real motives of these crimes and not the values themselves since these values (protecting the family's honour) were enshrined in the Arab society decades ago," Dr. Rubelhat said. "What we have to face now is that these crimes are reaching their peak because of the general frustration and poverty dominating people's lives without an immediate solution at hand."

In revolutionary terms, women's activist and prominent writer Suhair Al Tal strongly criticised what she saw as women's activists indifference to such "important issues, and their inability to shoulder responsibility."

Tens of women are being killed in the streets — some merely because of dowry (that they may have behaved "immorally") while women's activists fail to defend these victims or protest against such acts," Ms. Al Tal protested. She added that women leaders do not dare defend these issues out of fear of being labelled as "ones encouraging immoral acts."

Citing statistics gathered by Lama Abu Odeh, a PhD student, Ms. Al Tal pointed out that 30 per cent of murders are committed against women. She said that 90 per cent of crimes committed against women suspected of having pre-marital affair do not have the basic elements of crimes perpetrated in state of anger, where murderers receive reduced sentences, "but they apparently succeed in winning their cases due to gaps in the law," Ms. Al Tal said.

"It is tragic that until now women are being killed just because their brothers, fathers or relatives suspect that they have a

relationship with a man," she said. "What is more saddening is that men are spared and family honour befalls on women only, though both are partners in what the society perceives as criminal."

The NCCC study also shows that honour crimes are mainly carried out by minors. Its statistics reveal that youth under the age of 18 years had committed 58.9 per cent of all killings in Jordan between 1978 and 1985. According to sociologists, this is attributed to parental influence on children, using them to kill their sisters because they are easily driven by their emotions.

Apparently parents take advantage of the fact that minors do not receive the same punishment as adults. Minor convicts are often sent to rehabilitation centres for a number of years, where they continue their education and learn a profession. They are later released with no criminal record.

To Dr. Rubelhat, such crimes (family honour) and crimes in general committed in the country are linked to poor education mainly and to poor economic conditions.

"Most murders are committed by people who had barely received education at the preparatory level or below and also by those who suffer from deep economic difficulties," Dr. Rubelhat said. "This category of people is unaware of the dangers and consequences of such acts."

To Ms. Al Tal, it is basically the mentality that has to be changed and double standards used in ethical issues have to be eliminated "because no one has the right to take another one's life just because he has doubts."

Haya Arts Centre to set up 20 branches

AMMAN (Petra) — The Haya Arts Centre is planning to set up 20 cultural branches in different parts of the country, especially in densely populated areas, and hopes to establish a number of small public libraries in order to encourage good reading habits among children, according to Nabih Riyal, the Centre Director.

"Already we have eight small centres offering similar services like the Haya Arts Centre and these are offered free of charge, but this is not enough," said Mr. Riyal.

The Haya Arts Centre has already established 50 small libraries in villages and refugee camps along with charitable

societies' centres, but it hopes to increase the number, he added.

Founded in 1976, the Centre is designed to offer children the chance to participate in cultural and recreational activities considered complementary to those at school or home, noted Mr. Riyal.

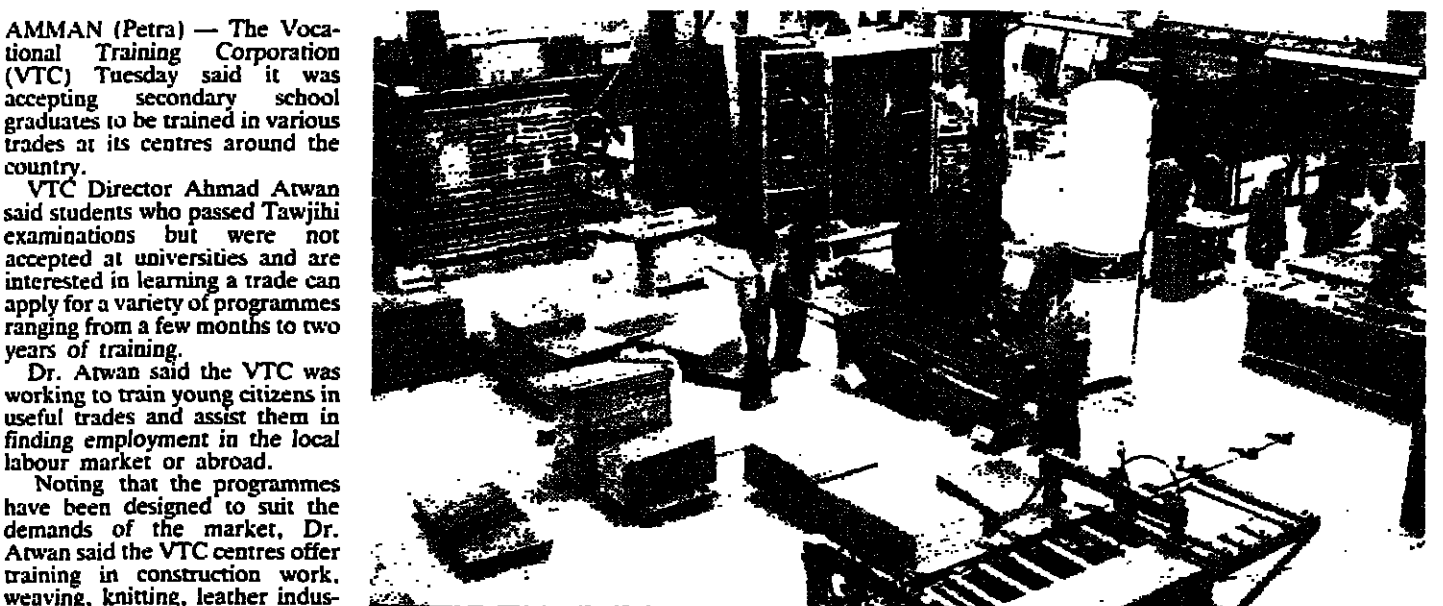
Children who subscribe to the Centre are taught skills which foster a sense of national belonging and the importance of community service, added Mr. Riyal. Lessons in history, protection of the environment, respect of traffic rules and road safety, sports and hobbies are all encouraged at the Centre, he said.

Although the actual cost of each child's participation is JD 50 per year, the subscription fee is

only JD 20 annually, he noted. The cost is subsidised by His Majesty King Hussein who has been financing the Centre's activities by personally donating JD 70,000 annually, Mr. Riyal disclosed.

The Centre, he added, cooperates closely with other cultural centres and charitable organisations as well as Amman Municipality, a number of schools and the Ministries of Culture and Youth in implementing its projects.

In cooperation with the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF), the Centre has created a Mobile Museum touring remote villages and displaying items featuring the history and culture of Jordan.



A carpentry workshop at VTC training centre (file photo)

gious feasts, and are offered the chance to acquire practical training at private workshops for JD 40 to JD 80 monthly.

Dr. Atwan said that with the diploma, which is formally endorsed by the concerned government authorities, trainees could

easily find employment in the local market or could open a garage or start their own business, funded with loans from the government.

At a meeting chaired by the Prime Minister late last month to

discuss VTC requirements and activities, Dr. Atwan said that VTC centres have already graduated 75,754 male and female trainees. The VTC has devised a five-year expansion plan aimed at improving its training facilities, he added.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ Exhibition of paintings by Jordanian artist Bishara Najjar at Esbelle Art Gallery, Amra Shopping Centre. The paintings depict Jordanian-Palestinian heritage, Jordanian antiquities, Arab Jerusalem, rural life and natural scenery.
- ★ Exhibition of a new collection of art works by Princess Wijdan Ali at The Gallery, Hotel Jordan Inter-Continental.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by 25 Jordanian artists at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition by Iraqi artists Mohammad Hussein Judi and Shawkat Al Alousi at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of paintings by a group of young Jordanian artists at the Royal Cultural Centre.

- ★ Exhibition of Arabic calligraphy and paintings at Tareq Park in Irbid City.

FILM

- ★ Feature film entitled "A shot in the Dark" at 7 p.m. at the British Council (99 minutes).

JERUSALEM FESTIVAL

- ★ Exhibition of paintings, posters, Palestinian costumes, books and other items on the Holy City of Jerusalem at the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation.
- ★ Exhibition of books on various subjects at Al Hashmiah Plaza, downtown Amman.
- ★ Seminar, in Arabic, entitled "The Novel — Experience and Dialogue" at 6.30 p.m. at the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation.

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

Executive secretary required for a regional office. It is anticipated that the successful applicant will have the following qualifications:

1. Knowledge of secretarial skills.
2. Excellent command of Arabic and English languages — both writing and speaking — is required.
3. Computer skills.
4. 2-5 years of experience.
5. Knowledge of clearing and shipping business is preferable.
6. University graduates, preferable.

Interested candidates who believe they have the required qualifications to fill this position may send their C.V.s along with their expected salary no later than Aug. 25, 1993, to the attention of:

General Manager
P.O. Box 811905
11181, Amman-Jordan

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New law, and after it

THE EXPECTED happened yesterday when His Majesty King Hussein announced the ratification of a new temporary law introducing the one-person, one-vote system in the electoral process. The whole country had been preparing for the news ever since the dissolution of Parliament, even before, although many had hoped the change would not be made, at least in this way. In his speech, the King did give forceful and persuasive reasons for introducing the new formula to govern the Nov. 8 elections. But while we both appreciate and support the strong argument in its favour we, like many others, would have liked to see the change take place in a different manner and may be even in a different scope altogether. To eliminate one feature of inequality in voting rights, only to leave others in place, is controversial at best, especially since the proposal for change was in itself originally divisive.

Still, we live in a democratic atmosphere that allows for those who oppose the change in the law to contest it in court on strictly legal grounds. The government thought that it had the authority to change a part or the whole of the current law in the manner that it did. On political grounds, however, it knew the decision was going to face strong opposition, and nevertheless took it.

When 16 registered political parties voice their objection to amending a basic law of the country in the absence of parliamentary life, there is a reason to believe that the next general elections will be held in rough political waters. But the Islamic Action Front (IAF), which is the biggest and most organised party in the country, will no doubt carefully read the King's message, especially since the King chose to specifically address them in his speech last night. The front's leaders will no doubt notice the King's call on them to fight the next elections in the true and tolerant spirit of Islam, a call that should place them under new pressure not to boycott the elections. This is exactly what should happen, for boycott and estrangement from the country's mainstream political body can only weaken them and the country as a whole. What all political parties and groups should do is strive to avoid internal political crisis that might lead to a real setback for the democratisation process.

There were signs last night that Islamist leaders were reading in the King's address the sort of message that they need in order to elevate themselves and their people above petty politics.

If this is indeed an accurate reading of their intentions, then every effort should be made to bring in the others towards common understanding of what is happening.

The government in particular should attempt to regain the initiative and impress upon its opponents and everybody concerned the need to work together, for the benefit of all and for the sake of democracy. The dialogue that was promised but never finished can be restarted and deepened to ensure that the elections will be free, fair and effective.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

NOW THAT the invitations to the Arab parties have been sent out and the 11th round of negotiations became imminent, Israel has resorted again to manoeuvres aimed at causing a breach in the united Arab stand. Sawt Al Shaab daily, Damascus is afraid that Lebanon and Israel are close to concluding an agreement on the deployment of Lebanese forces in southern Lebanon to stem the resistance activities against the Israeli forces, said the paper. It said that such apprehension and suspicions created by Israel can weaken coordination among Arab parties involved in the peace talks and can cause tension between Beirut and Damascus. Furthermore, the Rabin government is now promoting the idea of pulling out Israeli forces from Jericho and Gaza as part of a deal with the Palestinians and a first stage in the autonomy rule in the occupied territories. Such a gambit, said the paper, is aimed at causing divisions among the Palestinian people on the one hand and differences between the Palestinians and the other Arab parties on the other. The paper said that the Arab parties should take extra care and caution not to fall in the pits and the traps laid in their path by the Israeli government and ought to hold on to their unity. Israel is playing a dangerous game in the region and is being encouraged in all its actions by the U.S. administration, charged the daily. What Israel hopes to achieve, added the paper, is separate deals with individual Arab states.

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i Arabic daily described the Arab-Israeli peace process as a means of pressuring not only Jordan but also other Arab states in the region. Tareq Masarweh said that the Americans are resorting to this process to serve as a lure and impose on the Arabs the Israeli formula of a settlement. Jordan was on purpose inundated by a flood of 400,000 returning expatriates and its Aqaba port continues to be subjected to a blockade, the Iraqis are being starved and the Palestinians are under siege in the occupied Arab areas, said the writer. Syria is still on the U.S. list of states encouraging terrorism while the U.S. Congress is demanding a pull out of Syrian rather than Israeli forces from Lebanon, added the writer. For its part, Lebanon continues to face occupation of its southern regions and is being threatened by American and Israeli statements warning of further Israeli aggression, said the writer. He said that all the Americans and their allies are doing has one objective: to serve the Zionist purpose. He said that the countries of this region are used to poor life and could withstand poverty for years, but would not give in to blackmail or coercion.

Winners, losers and lessons learnt from the latest Palestinian crisis

From Daoud Kuttab
In Occupied Jerusalem
Special to the Jordan Times

THE WEEK-long battle in Tunis between senior members of the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks and the PLO leadership has produced winners and losers. While the resignations of Faisal Husseini, Hanan Ashrawi and Saeb Erekat were rejected by the PLO's Executive Committee, this daring manoeuvre, by the leadership in the occupied territories will have its effects on the Palestinian national movement for some time to come.

The winners

1. The PLO. By far, the Palestine Liberation Organisation came out of this crisis in much better shape than it did going into it. The PLO, most clearly in its Executive Committee, succeeded in containing the problem over the resignations and turning it around on its own favour. The fact that the three handed their resignation to the PLO is in itself the best proof as to the power and place of the PLO as the representative body of all Palestinians. The PLO also succeeded in giving the appearance of flexibility to the West and Israel while still retaining full and loyal support of the often rebellious and more headline delegation. The best proof of

the PLO's victory is the fact that the Israeli government accepted to deal with a clearly PLO delegation without any compromises made by the Palestinian side.

2. The three senior delegates. Mr. Husseini, Mrs. Ashrawi and Mr. Erekat made a high risk political gamble and it paid off. The PLO could have accepted their resignation and they would have been out. Instead, they succeeded to improve their standings with the Palestinian public and at the same time gained full support of the PLO. The Tunis-based leadership has seen that they have political guts and is unlikely to cross their path again or try to bypass them.

The crisis clearly showed that they are tougher in negotiations than the Tunis leadership, something which gives them high marks with the West Bank and Gaza population. They also succeeded to neutralise and weaken Haidar Abdul Shafi whose repeated tough stand was making them look weak politically as they followed PLO directives which Mr. Abdul Shafi at times chose to avoid. And unlike Mr. Abdul Shafi, the three were careful not to attack or criticise the PLO; yet, when, push came to shove, they proved that they had more courage than Mr. Abdul Shafi who, despite his criticism, has

fused to offer his resignation.

3. The occupied territories. While the struggle in Tunis wasn't exactly between the inside and the outside, to a certain degree what angered many was the fact that the leaders in the occupied territories were ignored and bypassed when an important document to be given to Secretary Christopher was being considered. The success of the senior delegates and the formation of the leadership committee with seven members from the occupied territories is a sure victory for the inside. As Mr. Husseini said in his first press conference after returning, "we were attending the meetings every now and then, now we are permanent members."

This victory for the occupied territories will give local leaders much more say in local decisions. Already a decision to create local bodies to deal with local issues is a clear success for the occupied territories.

The losers

1. Egypt. The Egyptian government has tried extra hard in recent months to show their American allies that they can deliver the Palestinians. To a large degree, the three were careful not to attack or criticise the PLO; yet, when, push came to shove, they proved that they had more courage than Mr. Abdul Shafi who, despite his criticism, has

zealousness of the Egyptians in their attempts to present senior U.S. officials with Palestinian papers that were pleasing to American eyes backfired. Not only were the two documents that Egypt gave the Americans altered before being officially presented by the delegation, but the entire team of PLO officials headed by Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) lost out in this battle in favour of the leaders of the occupied territories. The Egyptian loss also hurts the status of the PLO's ambassador to Egypt, Said Kamal, (who many sarcastically say is Egypt's ambassador to the PLO).

2. Opposition within the mainstream. When the resignations became public knowledge, a number of Palestinians in the occupied territories opened their mouths to criticise the senior Palestinian leaders. Private and public attacks were made by politically hungry individuals whose motives were very transparent. They took a gamble and it backfired in their faces when the PLO rejected the resignations and declared support for Mr. Husseini and company.

3. The U.S. and Israel. The crisis in the Palestinian side over the resignation sent a clear message to the Americans and Israel, if you push the Palestinian side extra hard, you will end up without a delegation in the occupied territories and only the PLO to talk to. The message that this crisis sent was not only that the PLO can be more flexible than the leaders in the occupied territories, but that any deal which will not satisfy the minimum aspirations of the Palestinian public at large will fail.

Neither winners nor losers

While some of the winners and losers are clearly identifiable, it is hard to predict where others stand. Time will tell if the following were in fact winners or losers or if their status remained unchanged.

1. Haidar Abdul Shafi: While the public statements of the head of the Palestinian delegation has made him the darling of the hard-liners among the Palestinian public, his attitude during this crisis left many people unimpressed. Mr. Abdul Shafi's refusal to join in submitting his resignation despite his repeatedly critical stand of the PLO showed him to be less a man of principles than he had been viewed by many. But at the same time, it is wrong to say he lost in this round. He remains the head of the delegation, he is part of the new leadership committee that was formed and his honesty can be credited for the courage of many others to be critical of the PLO.

2. Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen): Again it is hard to

judge whether he is a winner or loser. His involvement in the Egyptian document certainly hurt him and so has the fact that the committee he headed was dissolved, but the fact remains that with only a few minor changes the statement he drafted has been accepted by the PLO Executive Committee and the disgruntled delegates as the official Palestinian position. He has also been included in a very senior capacity regarding the leadership committee which will steer the negotiations from now on, so, at least on paper, his losses seem to balance out his gains.

Sarajevo — great powers play out the tragedy again

By William Pfaff

PARIS — A year and a half ago, it was possible to argue that the siege of Sarajevo was not "a new Sarajevo." Unlike in 1914, the great powers were not interested parties. It was a domestic tragedy, of interest to a larger world because of the Serbs' ominous defiance of the principles of postwar European order, but only for that reason. It no longer is possible to defend this position.

The events symbolised by the siege of Sarajevo have now become a scale that may in the end bear comparison with those of Sarajevo 1914. Then, the Serb-inspired assassination of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand resulted in the destruction of the Hapsburg, Ottoman, Hohenzollern and Czarist empires, and the replacement of the bourgeois civilisation and order of Europe as it had been by a new order of apocalyptic political movements, racism, class warfare, economic crisis and genocide.

What Sarajevo 1993 is accomplishing is the destruction of another order, that of western Europe since 1945. It is producing an end to the Atlantic alliance, the moral as well as political-military accord that for four decades has guaranteed international order.

The Balkan crisis has set France against Germany, Britain against both, and the United States against all. Consequently, the smaller powers that had committed themselves to European union and Atlantic security are becoming demoralised. The game of blame has been launched.

The project of a common foreign and security policy for Europe has been revealed to be a sinister charade, sinister because the idea that there should be a single policy has rationalised the failure of the European governments to assume individual responsibility for dealing with Yugoslavia.

France's constant demand for a sovereign Europe has been made to seem grotesque by Europe's incompetence in dealing with internal European aggression. France's claim to policy autonomy, promulgated by Charles de Gaulle and since defended by

every major French political figure, has been shown to be empty.

Today, France could reasonably be argued to be the second-most-powerful nation in the world, next to the United States, possesses important military forces that it is politically capable of employing in foreign operations. But Paris subordinated itself entirely to the divided will of the European Community members, then to the inherent obfuscations of the U.N. Security Council and the operational incompetence of the U.N. system, and finally to President Bill Clinton. What is the point of its proud regiments, its Foreign Legion, its nuclear aircraft carriers, its glorious military displays each July 14?

Europe has earned the contempt of Americans by its behaviour on Bosnia, producing a U.S. alienation from western Europe that will last and be damaging to both parties.

The conduct of the United States, which fears commitment, has been inglorious as well. It has ignored until too late the implications of aggression and ethnic purge in ex-Yugoslavia. Washington, has correctly insisted, however, that the crisis directly threatens Europe, not the United States, and that dealing with it has been primarily Europe's responsibility.

When the Clinton administration finally attempted to intervene in the crisis, it was blocked from doing so, principally by the French and the British. The two have a plausible reason for objecting to a military intervention that would have made their peacekeeping and humanitarian forces the object of Serb reprisals. They had a right to criticise the American insistence that others take all the risks of ground operations.

Still, they are responsible for the fact that Europe has now moved from a position that said that nothing could be done in the conflict without American leadership to a position that rejects American leadership while Europe does nothing.

Western Europe had already presented Americans with a



spectacle of economic difficulty, confusion and protectionism; a monetary union in crisis; a Maas-tricht treaty fiasco; a German failure to integrate East Germany, and a Community practicing a self-interested policy with respect to the struggling East European economies. Now appeasement of aggression in the former Yugoslavia and ratification of the results of ethnic cleansing have been added to that picture.

The Clinton administration came into office in January with a Pacific bias. The Clinton generation's experience is not of world war and Atlantic construction but of the Vietnam war, the dynamic development of Japan and the other East Asian economies, and of the demographic shift in the United States, where the Asian population has soared.

This administration intends to reduce U.S. military and political engagement abroad. This was to have meant a gradual and limited disengagement from Europe, in which the responsibility for pan-European order would have been assumed by the developing institutions of a united Europe. As a consequence of what now has happened, one must assume that there will be a rapid disengagement, which is unlikely to prove limited.

Europe has made itself again, in American eyes, what it was to Woodrow Wilson in 1916: a place of "power politics" and "jealousies and rivalries" from which a prudent America guards its distance. That it ended as it actually did for Wilson's America adds to the poignancy of the situation today — International Herald Tribune.

Pope finds things to condemn, praise in U.S.

By Victor L. Simpson
The Associated Press

DENVER — The man from the East made a pilgrimage to the West and worried about what he saw.

In four days in the United States, Pope John Paul II used some of the strongest language of his 15-year papacy to denounce what he sees as threats to society, principally what he called a "culture of death."

His specific targets were abortion, euthanasia, sexual liberty, pornography, street violence and drug and alcohol abuse.

It wasn't all criticism. The Pope and Vatican officials praised American Catholics for their social commitment and for the steady growth of the 58-million-member church.

And the Pope and President Clinton, who met Thursday,

seemed to share a vision on the role the United States should play in the world because of its "privileged" position, as the Pope put it.

But the Pope worried that Americans in the pursuit of liberty had lost sight of right and wrong.

"America needs much prayer — lest it lose its soul," he said in a bleak summation of the spiritual state of the country.

Much of this thinking might well be a preview of a long-delayed encyclical that will address the spiritual state of Catholics. The document, due out this year, is expected to say there are certain church principles that must be accepted without debate.

It may not specifically raise such issues as the ban on contraception, the refusal to permit women to be ordained as priests, and the celibacy requirement for

the male clergy, which have raised debate among American Catholics.

But the document is expected to sharpen the lines of opposition within the church, at least during the papacy of Pope John Paul II.

The idea that there are no absolute truths and each person can build a private system of values is sharply contested by the Pope, as he told young people at a prayer vigil Saturday night.

"In a culture which holds that no universally valid truths are possible, nothing is absolute," he said. "Therefore, in the end, they say, objective goodness and evil no longer really matter. Good comes to mean what is pleasing or useful at a particular moment. Evil means what contradicts our subjective wishes."

He hammered away at the point again Sunday, lamenting that in much of modern society

"any reference to a law guaranteed by the creator is absent. There remains only each individual's choice of this or that objective as convenient or useful in a given set of circumstances," he told an estimated 350,000 young people at a mass marking World Youth Day.

His vision is clearly coloured by his Polish background and his having lived as a young man under a Nazi occupation and then communist rule.

As a cleric in overwhelmingly Roman Catholic Poland, he battled for church freedom. After his election as Pope in 1978, his message spread across then Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe.

But as much as he railed against one form of oppression, the Pope also is bent on attacking consumer-driven societies in the West. He views them as another form of oppression.

LETTERS

Simple ways to solve big problems

To the Editor:

Yesterday I needed to go down to a court in Amman to respond to a warning I had received from my landlord through the notary public. I was directed by a policeman at the entrance to the relevant office where I found at least 25 people like myself waiting by the counter with only two employees. There was no queue situation forcing their way through. I asked if there was an information desk in the department where I could ask a question and was told that I had to wait until I managed to penetrate the ever-increasing crowd at the counter. I decided to ask my question aloud and was told to respond to my landlord's warning looking at the papers I held or inquiring into the nature of the problem. I proceeded to follow his instructions, only to be told by the clerks, outside the court, that I was given the wrong classical "wasta" procedure.

Keeping in mind all those who need to personally follow-up on such formalities and who cannot afford to pay solicitors, may I suggest that the following, low cost, remedies be taken into consideration for implementation: An information officer position be introduced to respond to people's queries and to give basic directions; the number of employees in areas where there are such bottlenecks be increased proportionally to the number of callers; and, to prevent the jumping of queues, callers be given out the world for this very purpose, and the system works perfectly.

This letter is not intended to attack our public institutions or to sound patronising, but to appeal to the authorities concerned to reduce the hassles as well as the time involved in the follow-up of such formalities.

Aysar Akrawi,
P.O. Box 35095,
Amman 11180.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

King says change constitutional necessity

(Continued from page 1)

text of the constitution and the National Charter, so that Jordanians can move rapidly towards the well-being and the glory of the nation. I would like to remind you of what I said when I addressed the national congress of the National Charter: Crowding impedes.

Dear brothers,

In our effort for a better tomorrow, the past four years have had some positive as well as some negative aspects. We are now on the threshold of new elections for a new parliament, which we hope will shoulder its responsibilities, at a critical time, both regionally and internationally. Every stage is but a new addition to an ever stronger edifice. Your awareness and dedication to achieving what is good for the country and for future generations is central to this effort. Solidarity among yourselves, as well as your continuing hard work, loyalty, and sincere patriotism and nationalism are all prerequisites to success. For failure, God forbid, will not only mean the collapse of our hopes, but it will expose this steadfast Arab country to extinction and oblivion. This would result in the success of the enemies of life and justice and it would mean that Jordan, God forbid, has failed the Arab individual in the Arab World. It would also mean that Jordan cannot be considered a reliable model for the nation as a whole with regard to its aspirations, capabilities and potential. This is the only path that Jordan should safely follow if it is to prove that it is a living nation.

This is the challenge we face. I speak to all of the voters among you to say that the Constitution has rendered you all equal in rights as well as duties. I remind you that the outgoing parliament, whose work is appreciated, was in fact elected on the basis of a temporary law. In my letter, accepting the resignation of the

first government in the life of that parliament, I cautioned that the electoral law requires attention, so that the voter — man or woman — will have the opportunity to vote for one candidate. Only the voter can determine who is best suited to represent him/her and express his/her views. It is well-known that the relevant constitutional article states that all Jordanians are equal regarding their duties and rights. When I referred to the temporary law on the basis of which the elections were held, I realised that this required a solution. We always look forward. As someone who took an oath, forty years ago, to respect the Constitution and serve the nation, I realise that a mistake cannot be dealt with by silence and indifference when its meaning and spirit become apparent.

Accordingly, we have endorsed a new temporary law stipulating an amendment to the election law, which is charged with holding free elections in this country under my guidance and supervision. I am honoured to shoulder my constitutional responsibility towards the three authorities: The legislative, the executive and the judiciary. The new temporary law entitles the electorate to cast one vote for one candidate in the new Lower House of Parliament. I have taken into consideration the necessity of limiting the amendment to the Election Law to this aspect, at this delicate stage, due to my belief that any other amendment that aims at linking the number of the electorate in a constituency and rendering it equal to that of another would mean depriving larger parts of the country of the right to effective parliamentary representation, which is necessary to improve their conditions, to ensure equal distribution in Jordan's comprehensive development. This is in addition to the fact that the regional political

situation is not yet stable, which would affect the status of Jordan and Jordanians irrespective of their origins. Therefore, the electoral districts will remain unchanged during the upcoming general parliamentary elections. I would like to emphasise that my government and I, as a father and a brother to each citizen, that we do not support one side over another. I call upon you all to realise that the Arab Hashemite Hussein, who has been honoured by God, to belong to the family of the Prophet Mohammad Bin Abdullah, peace be upon him, is above all worldly titles and positions. I am concerned with safeguarding the unity of the country; I am also most concerned about our sons, some of whom have been chosen to belong to a front, which they have named, the Islamic Front. What I wish for them and from them is that they truly practise their historic responsibilities in striving to live up to the name they have chosen, and to proceed, with God's help towards true Islam, in fulfillment of their spiritual and worldly duties, and in the defence of that which is most precious to us against attempts to undermine and distort Islam from within the Islamic Ummah and from without. This duty shall be done through progressing towards Islam for the glory of the best of peoples, evolved for mankind. And in proof of the truth that Islam is the true religion for the faithful believers in Allah, the pure, the righteous and good. This is what is needed for their existence, at every time and in every place.

I call upon my brothers to appreciate the meaning of success or failure that presents itself in our question which would affect the future of our nation, and the future of man whom God has honoured. Thus, I urge them to be loyal and to work sincerely. They have contributed in drafting the National Charter and the development of the country alongside all citizens, Muslims and Christians alike.

Fellow free Jordanians,

As I address you all, members of our one family, and each and every voter, I believe that it is time for you all to realise that I am working with you and for you. Do not fail yourselves and do not fail me. You should prove that you understand the significance of your responsibilities, not only towards yourselves, but also towards Jordan, the nation, the future and destiny. You should look into your matters thoroughly, and then proceed forward to elect, to our new parliament, the best the country has to offer. I pray to God to grant you success in choosing to this new parliament — after thorough and objective review — only those among you who are well known for their honesty, purity, and true loyalty to God and the nation. Do not be misled by the rigid symbols which are incapable of supporting and enriching the progress of the

nation. So elect to this new parliament representatives who reflect your true selves as I have known you: Sincere, loyal, honest and capable of excellent and giving. These representatives should be worthy of shouldering the responsibility of representing you to be able to bravely face what lies ahead with courage and awareness and full concern for your interests and the interests of generations to come.

Fellow Jordanians,

We started this nation's development with tolerance and Shura and we continue to tread on the same path today. Democracy in Jordan has become an example and a model, a blessed tree deep-rooted in this beloved Arab land, with its branches reaching towards the horizon of the great homeland. Let us move forward and shoulder our responsibilities, and go forth to the nation with the great call for freedom, unity and human rights, and let each one of us take responsibility for the protection of our chosen path against the danger of the greedy, the fearful and the hypocrites. We are on the threshold of two great issues: To complete the building of the united democratic Arab Jordan, and to rebuild the pan-Arab cause, embodied in the Great Arab Revolt in a new and modern context. Do not fail to exercise your right to vote. I shall ensure the integrity and honesty of the elections that will be the model for the trust that unites us: A trust in the inevitability of the victory of justice and the dawning of a new nation, with our awareness of our historic responsibilities and in our efforts to fulfil our duties in this nation which grows with every challenge, and whose people never bow to anyone but God. With God's help they will prevail in the face of the enemies of democracy. These enemies who fight democracy in democracy's name, and insist, although they be few, upon curtailing life in us. This is insolence on their part, a doubling of the path of our progress, a distortion of facts, a destruction of the edifice, with a negative outlook and pessimism in their vision, they have, therefore, become preachers of despair and instruments of frustration. So prove to them that you are stronger with the justice that you will uphold together with the dignity of man and future generations. With God's blessings: "It is part of the mercy of Allah that thou dost deal gently with them. Wert thou severe or harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from thee: So pass over (their faults), and ask for (Allah's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in affairs (of moment). Then, when thou hast taken a decision, put thy trust (in Him)." May the Almighty grant you success, and set you on the right path, for the Almighty is the ultimate protector and helper.

Peace be upon you and God's mercy and blessings.

Opponents may take issue to court

(Continued from page 1)

the Jordan Times after the news of the change was announced, said that this government "is not qualified to administer the elections and should have resigned" before taking such a step.

A spokesman for the IAF who spoke on condition of anonymity said his group will work with the opposition to adopt a united position on whether to boycott the elections.

"We will continue contacts with other political forces and adopt a joint position that we consider to be beneficial to the country," he said.

"The IAF will be part of the decision reached by the national forces," he said, before His Majesty the King delivered his speech to the nation. Other IAF sources told the Jordan Times that the front's 16-member political office, the

highest authority of the front, held a meeting Monday night during which at least seven members, led by former Speaker of the Lower House Abdul Latif Arabiyat, supported boycotting the elections if a new law was introduced.

"Had there been a dialogue (on the need for change), which respected the people and institutions of Jordan, most people would have accepted the result with open minds," a senior IAF source said. "First, it was promised that a dialogue would precede the decision. That promise never materialised and all of a sudden the (Lower) House was dissolved. Is this democracy?"

Early reports, however, indicated that the moderates among IAF leaders may have been positively influenced by the King's address and special emphasis on the IAF's "historic responsibility" to rise up to the name they had chosen for their party.

A source close to IAF thinking said that several IAF moderates were "influenced positively" by the King's plea for "assessing the meaning of success or failure of our march." The source said that the IAF may choose to take up the responsibility placed upon it by the King and "avoid a confrontation over the law."

"The King's clear allusion to outside pressures on the Kingdom may also moderate the front's next move," the source added.

But while the opposition to the change had made its position clear, proponents of the one-person, one-vote system were equally convinced that the change has more advantages than disadvantages.

A former deputy and Cabinet minister said he believed that the change will make the voter more conscious of the value of his or her vote. "In the old law people used to vote indiscriminately," he

said. "The change, however, will force the voter to think, consider and weigh out his or her choice because his or her vote is now more precious."

The former minister and others who support the new law believe that the opposition to the change is triggered mainly by "personal interests" of the opponents. "They will all be affected negatively by the change and that is why they are working against it," the former deputy said.

But the proponents did not spare the government from criticism either. "The government was indecisive and did not explain the reasoning behind the change to the public properly," said a supporter of the one-person, one-vote system. "Now it has no choice but to realise its failure and work on all fronts to explain the new law and its effects so that the public would be fully aware of what is happening."

Resistance

(Continued from page 1)

The presidents of Syria and Lebanon have agreed that the Middle East peace process needs to be put on track, Syrian news reports said Tuesday.

In a meeting Monday, Syrian President Hafez Al Assad and Lebanese President Elias Hrawi "expressed keenness about the Middle East process," Syrian state television said.

Syrian Television said Mr. Assad and Mr. Hrawi coordinated their own countries' joint stance for the next round with Israel. SANA said they agreed that the peace process needs to be put on a track that can lead to comprehensive peace in the region.

Libya ready

(Continued from page 1)

April 15, 1992.

The sanctions include an air and military embargo and the three Western countries said they planned to step up the measures by including the oil, financial and technological sectors.

The Libyan minister said Libyan and British officials had met two weeks ago in Cairo and that his country had conveyed "all data requested by London" but gave no other details.

British and Libyan officials met in 1992 first in Geneva then in Cairo when Libya shared information it had on the Irish Republican Army, which it had backed in the 1970s and early 1980s.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak was travelling to Libya Tuesday to meet Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi about the latest Libyan crisis with the West.

The president's trip follows Libya's rejection of the new demands by the United States, Britain and France.

Amendment affects two articles

(Continued from page 1)

And since the Islamic Action Front (IAF) is by far the most organised political party in the country, observers say it was the big winner under the old electoral system and would be the big loser under the new one.

"It is only a matter of time before political parties are organised into one, two, three or four parties encompassing well-studied and convincing programmes... so that Jordanians can move rapidly towards the will-being of their nation," King Hussein said in a televised speech Tuesday.

The IAF, by virtue of its high organisational structure, had an edge over other newly licensed political groups. The one person, one-vote system denies the front one of the major mechanisms through which it tapped its ability to organise its supporters and election strategy.

The front, which fiercely opposed the expected change before it was announced, has felt targeted by the change, which it had earlier said would be tailored to weaken its performance in the elections for the 12th Parliament on Nov. 8.

In the 1989 elections, the Muslim Brotherhood, which will contest the next elections on the IAF ticket, won 23 seats in the 80-member Lower House of Parliament. Observers say the number was dis-

proportionate to the actual support the movement had among the electorate, attributing its success to the electoral system.

By denying the Islamists the opportunity of joining forces with other candidates, observers believe the one-person, one-vote system would cut the parliamentary representation of the IAF to a level more representative of their support base.

Along with other political parties, the IAF agreed with the government that there were many flaws in the 1986 Election Law, which was amended in 1987 and again in 1989 through temporary laws, but demanded that the changes be comprehensive.

Even proponents of change had said the one-person, one-vote formula should not be introduced without restructuring voting districts towards equal representation for equal number of people in each district.

The country is currently divided into 20 voting districts for which different numbers of parliamentary seats are allocated. The precincts are drawn along with administrative divisions of the country.

The introduction of the one-person-one-vote system to an election law which allocated more than one candidate to each voting district could lead to huge discrepancies in the number of votes that could

carry each candidate to the House, observers say.

They also say that deputies elected under such a system would end up representing the people who elected them in the precinct and not all its residents.

But citing the necessity of ensuring parliamentary representation for under-populated areas of the Kingdom and uncertainty about the outcome of a regional political process that "could positively or negatively affect Jordan and its people (who come from) different origins," the King said the voting districts would remain unchanged for this election.

Minister of Interior Salameh Hamad last week ruled out the redrawing of voting districts on the grounds that the process would have required a new registration of voters. That was "behind us," he said.

King Hussein emphasised in his speech that the changes were introduced to strengthen the democratisation process and ensure citizens the equality that the Constitution grants them in rights and duties. He recalled that he had pointed to the need of changing the Election Law in 1991.

"We (have) realised that the problem (in the Election Law) needed to be addressed. And we are moving towards what is better," the King said. A mistake cannot be treated by ignoring it, he said. And hence was his decision to change the Election Law.

PLO crisis part of problem

(Continued from page 1)

stages of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations.

These fears were further confirmed when American officials bluntly told the Palestinians that neither 242 nor the letters of assurances were enforceable.

Initially the PLO leadership publicly rejected to deal with the American proposal. But, behind the scenes, the leadership, or at least some members of it, had immediately started negotiations through British and Egyptian channels to find a common ground between the American proposal and the Palestinian position.

According to interviews with a number of senior Palestinian officials — both supporters and opponents of the peace process — the chief PLO coordinator of the peace process, Dr. Nabil Shaath, and Mr. Hussein met with British Foreign Minister Douglas Hurd in London immediately after the tenth round of talks.

During that meeting Mr. Hurd suggested that the Palestinians deal with the American paper by presenting modifications instead of an outright rejection of the proposal.

The sources told the Jordan Times that specific ideas were discussed with Mr. Hurd, which later appeared in the Palestinian response. "The first draft was based on that discussion with Hurd," said one PLO official.

Later on Mr. Hussein flew back to Washington and met with American officials. Accounts about the position that Mr. Hussein conveyed, allegedly to Mr. Christopher, are ambiguous.

Some officials say that Mr. Hussein had actually started negotiating the American proposal with the Americans shortly after the London talks, others, including other negotiators, maintain that he clearly told the U.S. officials that the leadership did not consider the American paper to constitute an adequate basis for the negotiations.

The fundamental points in the official draft was finally formulated in Cairo by Mr. Abbas and Dr. Shaath. Some PLO officials maintain that Egyptian officials, including Osama Al Baz and Amr Musa, also took part in drafting the document.

It was after formulating the draft that the PLO officials showed it to Mr. Hussein, who was visiting Cairo. Some PLO officials claim that Mr. Hussein was given a copy and asked to consult with his colleagues over it. The revelations gave way to speculation bordering on accusations that Mr. Hussein deliberately did not show the document to his

colleagues. The significance of this incident is that it had created a feeling among the delegation that the "individualistic pattern" in the PLO leadership was being emulated in the delegation.

But perhaps the most significant implication of the episode, judging by public statements of a number of negotiators, is that it revealed that most of the delegation members have strong reservations, if not total opposition, to the current Palestinian policy and that differences could develop into an outright rift within the delegation.

Yet despite their political opposition, the majority of the delegation members refused to join Mr. Hussein, Dr. Ashrawi and Dr. Erekat in submitting a collective resignation mainly because they viewed the move as part of a power game and did not believe that there were serious, if any, differences, between the leadership and Mr. Hussein.

Regardless of the reasons why Mr. Hussein wanted to resign, both Dr. Ashrawi and Dr. Erekat, according to the arguments they put forward at the Tunis meeting, expressed serious concerns (apparently shared by all of the negotiators) about being used as a tool to make unpopular concessions and at the same time not even taking part in decision-making.

Dr. Ashrawi challenged the PLO leadership to lay down the PLO strategy to the delegation and strongly protested against the organisation's using other channels, mainly Egypt, to communicate and negotiate with the U.S. over the head of the delegation.

Some PLO officials believe that some leading members of the delegation are alarmed by prospects of direct negotiations between Israel and the PLO. But even if the delegation's constant attempts to negotiate with the U.S. through Egypt do, to a certain extent, reflect a power struggle, there is wide discontent within the PLO and the delegation against the leadership's growing reliance on consultations with Cairo which usually argues in favour of U.S. position.

It is unclear how far the debate, which seems to be more serious and sharper in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, will influence the Palestinian negotiating position. But most Palestinian officials and analysts expect the opposition from inside the delegation and outside to focus on making sure that the Palestinians are not dragged into accepting the Israeli-inspired early empowerment plan, which involves transfer of functions and does not acknowledge Palestinian territorial jurisdiction.



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Strong yen hammering tourists and other foreigners

Dollar steps back from the brink

TOKYO (AFP) — The dollar edged back from its record-shattering slide against the yen Tuesday as attention focussed on a special cabinet meeting later in the week to discuss Japan's increasingly fragile economic situation.

After hitting a new low of 100.40 yen during the morning, despite reports of repeated intervention by the Bank of Japan, the dollar regained some strength in the afternoon to close at 101.55 yen, up from Monday's finish of 101.25 yen.

Dealers said the dollar's continued decline in early trading followed a Wall Street Journal report that the United States was unlikely to support the currency and local reports quoting an unidentified Japanese government source as saying that the yen's appreciation was likely to continue.

The source was quoted by Jiji Press and Kyodo News Service as saying the yen's recent advance to a series of post-war highs reflected the country's burgeoning trade surplus. "We cannot reduce the value of the yen without reducing the surplus," the source reportedly said.

Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa, meanwhile said that the stronger yen was "really troublesome" for Japan. "We should act to prevent foreign exchange rates from becoming unstable," he told reporters at a mountain resort.

Asked if Japan would call for coordinated market intervention with other countries, which have

been notably absent in supporting action taken by the Bank of Japan, he said: "We have not yet talked about it in the government."

A top government leader, also unidentified, was later quoted by Japanese news agencies as saying that emergency short-term measures to deal with the stronger yen could be worked out as early as autumn.

The Asahi Shimbun, a leading newspaper, meanwhile reported Tuesday that the cabinet would consider moves to deregulate various industries to help narrow the trade surplus at the special meeting on the economy Thursday.

Among measures being considered were the lifting of restrictions on imports of building materials, the newspaper said.

Finance Minister Hirohisa Fujii, describing the dollar's slide as a matter of "grave concern," said Monday that the meeting of economic ministers would discuss possible pump-priming measures to stimulate the economy.

Expectations of a possible cut in the Bank of Japan's official discount rate were meanwhile renewed Tuesday when the rate on three-month certificates of deposit fell to another all-time low of 2.90 per cent.

Some analysts reckon a discount rate cut could relieve upward pressure on the yen while providing a welcome boost to the still stagnant economy.

The mass-circulation Yomiuri Shimbun said Tuesday that the

dollar's fall to the 100-yen level "must now be accepted" and called on the government to exploit the benefits of the strong yen and the snowballing trade surplus.

"The foremost objective should be passing the profits of the strong yen on to the people to better their livelihood and to rectify the disparity of prices between Japan and other nations," the newspaper said in an editorial.

"The government should act now to adopt effective policies to end the vicious cycle in which its protective and regulatory measures lead to current account surpluses and cause harm to export-oriented industries because of the appreciation of the yen," the Yomiuri said.

Japanese tourists might be cheering the yen surging to record post-war highs, but it is giving nightmares to their foreign counterparts and frightening overseas firms wanting to do business in Japan.

The 100 yen to one dollar rate — which is yet to be achieved on foreign exchange markets with the record set Tuesday at 100.40 — is already in place in banks, hotels and airports.

The cost of goods and services in Tokyo, which has been long classed as the world's most expensive city, has jumped more than 20 per cent in dollar terms in recent weeks.

"My refrigerator is empty," a U.S. mother living here told Japanese television. "Vegetables

and fruits are really too expensive."

She is one of the foreigners facing huge bills for what are basic items back home, because many food prices rise during Japan's wet and humid summer anyway.

Tomatoes cost \$2 each, an apple or peach \$3, and a kilogram of oranges \$8.

Offering visitors a bunch of grapes is out of the question since they cost \$10 a bunch while the price of a handful of cherries is incalculable. It is necessary to shop around for melons, since a single one can cost anywhere between \$6 and \$100.

Quenching thirst is just as expensive, a dollar 15 years ago bought seven cans of Coca-Cola, but now cannot buy one. One and a half litres of mineral water costs \$3.

One of the better bargains in Japan is a "Big Mac" from McDonalds, which costs only \$3.80.

Eating Japanese-style is no cheaper. The staple rice is six times more expensive here than the world price, costing \$7 a kilogramme.

To travel or have fun takes more than pocket money. The fast train which travels the 500 kilometres from Tokyo to Kyoto costs \$125 one way.

Tollgates on the same route slug motorists for \$120 while a litre of gas for the car costs \$13. Going to the movie takes \$15.

There are no bargains to be had in shopping for renowned

Japanese electronics. Generally electronic items cost more here than they do overseas.

"Travellers from abroad cannot get even 100 yen when changing their dollars to yen, so their expenses in this country are becoming prohibitively high," the daily Yomiuri newspaper said.

One thing that immediately confronts visitors to Tokyo and hardly encourages businessmen to set up here is the cost of a taxi from Narita airport to downtown Tokyo — more than \$200.

The Imperial Hotel in the business quarter costs \$400 a night. Guests have little incentive to get their hair cut there, as that costs on average \$35. To dryclean a suit costs about \$15.

Those who set up an office here have to confront the rent bill. An upmarket apartment costs \$15,000 a month while even a 26 square metre studio costs \$1,500 a month.

To buy a small house from Tokyo costs between \$800,000 and \$1 million.

Naturally imports are cheaper in yen terms, but the government recently clamped down on U.S. and Australian beef imports because they were becoming too competitive.

With the dollar at 100 yen, the Japanese are clearly the richest people in the world judged by a gross domestic product in dollar terms.

According to the economic daily Nihon Keizai, the average GDP per capita is now \$36,000 compared with \$27,000 in 1991.

China cracks down on state pay hikes on new anti-inflation move.

PEKING (AFP) — China announced Tuesday a tough new step in its anti-inflation campaign, warning loss-making state firms to rein in pay increases that are speeding out of control and repay debts or face a subsidy axe.

"The move is part of the state's bid to strengthen its control of the economy... (and) will help China's fight against inflation," the official English-language China Daily said.

Under new regulations worked out by a state triumvirate, "only profit-making enterprises will be allowed to increase wages and bonuses," the paper said, quoting Liu Jiesan, director of the labour ministry's wage department.

"And state-owned firms which make no effort to pay off their debts will gradually lose their government subsidies," Mr. Liu reportedly said.

The announcement marked the latest effort to cool an economy that many analysts fear is overheating thanks to explosive growth in the smaller private sector, analysts said.

Gross domestic product (GDP) raced ahead by 13.9 per cent in the first half of 1993 compared with the same period in 1992, according to the State Statistics

Bureau. Inflation in major cities is running at some 20 per cent.

In the past two months, the government has sought to assert control by reshuffling top officials in the central bank, restricting credit, demanding that banks recall "unauthorised" loans made to speculative ventures, and placing curbs on investment in property.

Those moves contrast with liberalising regulations last year that ordered officials to hand over decision-making power to state enterprises in 14 areas, including salaries, in a bid to wean them off subsidies.

But the freedom has resulted in enormous pay hikes, the figures released Tuesday showed. Thirty-one per cent of state firms are in the red, but the sector still paid out 41.29 billion yuan (\$7.24 billion) in bonuses during the first half of 1993 — 38 per cent more than in the same period last year.

In the private sector, however, extra income from second jobs and benefits from holding and trading in stocks meant that individuals enjoyed an increase of 63 per cent.

In Hong Kong, analysts warned that the clamp on wages might be too drastic, as China has

still to prick the inflationary balloon.

Some were worried that the step could fuel jealousy and friction among state employees, who would see their colleagues in the private sector continue to gain far bonuses while their own pay stagnated.

"It is a very dangerous single measure," said Vincent Chan, an economist at Peregrine Brokerage. "It may look as if workers are being robbed to subsidise the company's investment. The measure can be effective only for the short term."

He also said that some investors in China, lured by the prospect of a booming consumer market, might be deterred if the measures put spending into a tailspin.

Economist Benjamin Chan of Bank of East Asia said "China should tackle the inflation first before freezing workers' incomes. It will be too drastic and workers will be unhappy with it."

The new rules were formulated by the ministry of labour, the State Economic and Trade Commission and the State Commission for Restructuring the Economic System, China Daily said.

Australian budget reverses 10-year trend towards low indirect taxes

CANBERRA (AFP) — Cuts in company and income taxes and greater use of indirect tax are prominent features of the 1993-94 Australian government budget announced by Treasurer John Dawkins here Tuesday.

The budget deficit of 16.01 billion dollars (\$10.88 billion) is the largest in dollar terms in Australia's history and the third largest as a proportion of gross domestic product (GDP), corresponding to 3.8 per cent of forecast GDP.

But, Mr. Dawkins told parliament, "this is a budget to strengthen the recovery and make it sustainable," and he predicted that measures introduced now would help reduce the deficit to six billion dollars, or 1.0 per cent of GDP, within four years.

Figures contained in the budget statement gave weight to a recent study which concluded that it would be impossible to achieve that target without reversing the 10-year trend that has given Australia the lowest proportion of indirect taxes among the 24 nations of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Among measures announced by Mr. Dawkins, those earning between 20,700 and 50,000 dollars a year will benefit from an average four per cent tax cut from Nov. 1, although total income tax receipts will rise by 1.21 billion dollars to 48.53 billion in the year to June 30, 1994.

Receipts from company tax will drop by 231 million dollars to 12.84 billion.

But revenue from sales taxes, customs and excise is scheduled to rise from 2.03 billion to 24.29 billion dollars.

Much of the increase will come from an immediate rise of three cents a litre on all kinds of petrol (taking the price of regular unleaded petrol to about 73 cents), with an extra five cents a litre on leaded petrol within 18 months.

"This recognises the harmful effect of lead in petrol, particularly on children," Mr. Dawkins said. "And will accelerate the conversion of the motor vehicle fleet to unleaded petrol."

Anticipating attacks from the opposition, Mr. Dawkins said "the government will meet its announced objectives without the introduction of a massive new indirect tax."

Labour's widely unexpected election victory in March was largely due — opinion polls showed — to the unpopularity of the opposition's proposal to introduce a 15 per cent goods and services tax (GST).

Mr. Dawkins acknowledged Tuesday that "failure to act on the indirect tax side would create pressures for more weight on income tax, a weight which would fall most heavily on middle-income earners."

A report by the OECD in Paris

shows that the proportion of indirect taxes in total tax receipts in this country dropped from 34 per cent in 1983, when the Labour Party began 10 uninterrupted years in office, to 26 per cent now.

During the election campaign, Prime Minister Paul Keating unrelentingly hammered the proposed GST as an inequitable impost, which would hurt the poor more than the rich.

But a recent study by the University of New South Wales said that, with unemployment at its highest for almost 60 years, the government could no longer rely so heavily on income tax, and warned that unless indirect taxes go up, the budget deficit would surge to 18 billion dollars with four years.

The budget statement showed that actual income tax receipts in the past financial year were 47.31 billion dollars, 2.10 billion dollars lower than forecast in the previous budget.

"The shortfall can be attributed to weaker than expected economic conditions, which resulted in lower employment growth," the statement read.

Ministry honours Air France chief

The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, represented by Secretary General Nasir Atallah, recently honoured the outgoing General Manager of the Air France Group in Amman, Mr. JC. Rouyer, in recognition of his achievements in enhancing touristic relations between France and Jordan throughout his three-year term.

The French trade commissioner of the French embassy in Amman, Mr. Michel Duger, also awarded Mr. Rouyer The Medal of Foreign Trade which is an award given out by the French Centre for Foreign Trade.

Britain's aim for sustainable growth may prove elusive

LONDON (R) — British stocks and government bonds have soared in recent months on hopes the country is set for a golden period in the 1990s — with low inflation and steady growth, a double act not achieved since the 1960s.

But leading economists believe it is premature to declare Britain has broken free from a stop-go economic cycle which has troubled policy-makers for decades, and say urgent institutional changes are needed to help in the ongoing inflation battle.

"It is far too early to declare inflation dead," said David Coleman, economist at the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce.

Try telling that to Britain's financial markets.

The Financial Times-Stock Exchange index of 100 leading shares soared above the 3,000-point level last Wednesday, as a wave of institutional and private investor buying squeezed prices higher, and it has stayed up there since then.

Government bonds have also jumped, with yields on the long end of the curve now at 7.35 per cent compared with around 8.60 per cent at the beginning of June.

The markets, cheered by the weak price pressures accompanying sterling's sharp devaluation,

are focusing on the possibility of several years of non-inflationary growth.

While the prospects for growth and inflation this year and next look fairly good, economists said price pressures could yet pick up sharply, forcing interest-rate rises.

"Inflationary pressures... are not dead — they have merely been in partly suspended animation during the worst of the recession," said Ruth Lea, chief economist at Mitsubishi Bank.

Take the record. Inflation hit 13.0 per cent in 1952, 10.3 per cent in 1971, 26.9 per cent in 1975, 21.9 per cent in 1980, and 10.9 per cent as recently as October 1990. The all-items inflation rate is now 1.2 per cent — a 30-year low which could rise quickly when consumer demand really starts to pump through the economy.

Consumer demand has so far remained relatively subdued in the early stages of economic recovery, forcing companies to keep prices low and even bring forward seasonal price discounts.

But demand could rise quickly, economists said, particularly if residential house starts to pick up this year and next, making people feel richer and more inclined to spend.

The other potential worry is wages. Average earnings rises in the economy fell to 3.5 per cent annually in June. But some economists fear wage demands will rise as the recovery gathers pace, as the labour market is still hampered by skill shortages and a low level of labour mobility.

"Every time British inflation falls to a low you get the usual chitchat about how it will remain weak for years. But there is no reason to suspect British economic management will be any better in coming years than it was in previous decades, so inflation will make a return," economist Coleman said.

Rather than a golden scenario for the economy, policy-makers face a series of tests this year and next just to ensure the economy keeps growing at a steady pace, economists said.

The dual deficit problems — a current account deficit running at two per cent of gross domestic product and government borrowing at eight per cent of GDP in 1993-4 — requires urgent attention and could well cap future growth.

Economists expect the economy to grow 1.8 per cent in 1993, below average growth of 2.25 per cent over the past four decades.

Report says Arab oil activity picked up in '92

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab states stepped up oil development and exploration in 1992 although they already control more than 60 per cent of the world's proven crude reserves, according to an official report.

The bulk of the activity occurred in Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil exporter, as well as Kuwait and Iraq, which have recovered from the Gulf war through the latter's still reeling under United Nations sanctions.

Saudi Arabia drilled 249 exploratory and development oil wells in 1992 compared with 194 wells in 1991 and 98 wells in 1990, said the report by the Cairo-based Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC).

Kuwait drilled 90 wells in 1992 compared with 26 wells in 1991 and as few as seven wells in 1990, when it was invaded by Iraqi forces. Iraq spudded 61 wells in 1992, up from only five in 1991 and an eight-year high of 175 wells in 1990, the monthly bulletin showed.

Activity also picked up in Libya, with the drilling of 132 wells in 1992 compared with 98 wells in 1991 and 71 wells in 1990. Egypt drilled 136 wells, the highest rate in four years while the wells in Tunisia and Syria increased in 1992 to 37 and 98,

respectively.

In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Oman and Yemen, oil operations slowed down although the number of wells drilled were relatively high. They stood at 67, 155 and 84 wells, respectively in 1992.

Arab states sit on nearly 630 billion barrels of oil, accounting for 62 per cent of the world's reserves. Their crude output of about 16 million barrels per day totals some 25 per cent of total world production.

Most Arab countries have launched projects to raise oil production capacity to face an expected increase in world demand.

The OAPEC report said oil rigs operating in the Arab World increased to 319 in 1992 from 193 in 1991. Most of the increase came from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Libya, the UAE and Yemen.

In contrast, the report showed refining output capacity in the region sharply declined due to the war damage to Kuwaiti and Iraqi refineries.

Total Arab refining capacity dropped to 4.72 million barrels per day (b/d) in 1992 from 5.28 million b/d in 1991. Refining output in Kuwait, which plans to repair its units, plunged to 368,000 b/d from 670,000 b/d while it declined in Iraq to 318,000 b/d from 550,000 b/d.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



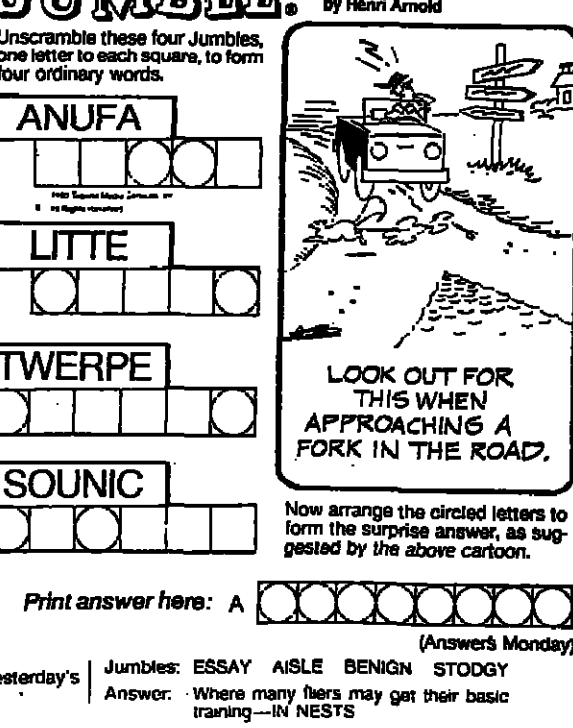
Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF. By Harris



JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME



Horoscope not received

THE Daily Crossword by Rena M. Campbell



Economy

[illegible]

U.S. sees growing threat from Airbus

WASHINGTON (R) — The U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) said Monday that Airbus Industrie, the European aircraft consortium, is a growing threat to U.S. makers of large civilian aircraft bus for thousands of job losses in the United States and said he wanted "tough new discipline" over European subsidies, as agreed to in a 1992 accord.

Mr. Clinton, however, retre-

But the independent government agency said in a study that the U.S. industry, led by Boeing Co., remains dominant in the global market despite direct European government support for Airbus.

The report had been requested by the Senate Finance Committee in June 1992 to study U.S. competitiveness, since Airbus had been sharply criticised in the United States for receiving government subsidies.

President Bill Clinton, soon after taking office, blamed Air-Industrie," the ITC said in a statement.

U.S. producers of large civil aircraft account for 64 per cent of worldwide unit orders and 73 per cent of worldwide unit deliveries, the ITC said.

These shared equal more than a 20 per cent decline since the levels logged in 1970, but the volume of U.S. deliveries has risen by 160 per cent during the same period as global demand has increased, the ITC said.

As for competitiveness, the ITC said government support has "a significant effect" on the race for market share.

It said direct support from western European governments had cut Airbus's costs — allegedly by billions — in both research and development, manufacturing and marketing.

Growing oil imports widen gap in GCC-Asia trade

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Growing Asian reliance on Gulf oil is keeping the trade balance largely in favour of the Arabs despite attempts to boost exports to this lucrative region, official trade figures have shown.

While other industrial nations have managed to turn the scale in their favour, Japan and other key Asian economic partners of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) are still reeling under high deficits.

Asian officials said this was due to a steady increase in oil imports from the GCC, mainly by Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, whose

trade with the 12-year-old Gulf alliance peaked at \$48 billion in 1992, nearly one-third of the GCC's total trade.

"Japan and other Asian states are increasingly relying on Gulf oil, given growing domestic demand and declining supplies from other sources. The level is expected to increase further in the next period," a Japanese diplo-

The trade deficit between Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, and, the GCC stood at around \$23 billion in 1992 compared with \$19.5 billion in 1991 and about \$14 billion in 1990, according to

Japan sustained the largest deficit, \$16 billion, while the deficits stood at \$5.7 billion for South Korea and \$1.6 billion for Taiwan.

China reported a surplus of \$300 million but economists believe that in effect it suffered from a deficit as its oil imports from the Gulf are not registered because they come through intermediate

The deficits persisted despite a rise in exports of about 20 per cent, mostly from Japan.

Clinton says health care plan will not cost jobs

TULSA, Oklahoma (R)—President Bill Clinton told U.S. governors Monday that his soon-to-be-unveiled health care reform plan will require all employers to subsidize health insurance for small businesses so they would not have to dismiss people to pay for insurance, Mr. Magaziner said.

Mr. Magaziner said Mr. Clinton would likely propose higher taxes on cigarettes, or alcohol, or both and these revenues would be directed toward long-term health care. But overall, he said, "We're not looking to increase taxes right

Mr. Clinton, in a long discourse on his next major policy initiative, to be formally launched

"I don't think we can do it unless we sit down together and talk and work," he said, departing often from his prepared text and sounding at times as if he were thinking aloud.

"I think every American should know that health care is not something paid for by the tooth fairy, that there is no free ride, that people should understand that this system costs a lot of money," Mr. Clinton said.

He said his plan would call for coverage for all Americans and that the only viable option to pay the cost, which he did not dis-

workers pay part. But nearly 40 million Americans are uninsured and their health care costs impose a massive burden on the overall system.

Mr. Clinton sought to cushion fears about the controversial element of his reform plan — known as an employer mandate — by promising it would be accompanied by significant insurance reforms, a long phase-in period and a limitation on premiums for very

John Motley, an official of the

and ultimately a loss of jobs, particularly in small business. Republicans are sceptical about the Clinton plan.

"What we don't have any answers on is how do you pay for

answers on is how do you pay for a phase-in. There's no financial data. "South Carolina's Republican Governor Carroll Campbell told reporters after Mr. Clinton's speech, estimating the overall cost at \$60 to \$100 billion a year. Mr. Campbell, incoming chair-

Mr. Campese, incoming chairman of the National Governors' Association and a possible 1996 presidential aspirant, said he and many colleagues feared that the

Japan is the largest single importer of Gulf oil, receiving

around 2.7 million barrels per day (b/d) in 1992, nearly 60 per cent of its total crude intake. The level was about 50 per cent in the early 1980s and is expected to exceed 70 per cent by the year 2000 as other supply sources continue to decline.

Although the value of Japan's exports could rise in 1993 thanks to a stronger yen, this could have

Financial Markets **Jordan Times**
In co-operation with
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Currency	New York 2024	Toronto 2024
	Rate: 16 8/33	Rate: 17 5/33
Sterling Pound	1.4895	1.4877
Deutsche Mark	1.5869	1.5870
Swiss Franc	1.4960	1.4961
French Franc	5.9805	5.9825**
Japanese Yen	101.58	101.55
European Currency Unit	1.1270	1.1270**

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	3.00	3.12	3.31	3.56
Sterling Pound	5.75	5.81	5.60	5.50
Deutsche Mark	6.71	6.50	5.90	5.87
Swiss Franc	4.65	4.56	4.50	4.31
French Franc	9.62	8.06	6.75	5.75
Japanese Yen	2.96	2.67	2.64	2.61
European Currency Unit	8.56	7.66	7.06	6.43

Precious Metals			Date: 17/8/1993		
Metal	USD/oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	372.55	7.30	Silver	4.76	6.105

Date: 17 8 1993		
Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6910	0.6950
Sterling Pound	1.0377	1.0328
Deutsche Mark	0.4095	0.4115
Swiss Franc	0.5621	0.5644
French Franc	0.1156	0.1162
Japanese Yen	0.6869	0.6903
Dutch Guilder	0.3637	0.3655
Swedish Krona	0.0860	0.0864
Italian Lira	0.0430	0.0432
Belgian Franc	0.01914	0.01924

Other Currencies		Date: 17/8/1995
Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.8104	1.8400
Lebanese Lira	0.03893	0.04053
Saudi Riyal	0.1846	0.1860
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.2550	2.3200
Qatari Riyal	0.1873	0.1890
Egyptian Pound	0.2000	0.2250
Omani Riyal	1.7620	1.8400
UAE Dirham	0.1873	0.1890
Greek Drachma	0.2675	0.3375
Cypriot Pound	1.3270	1.3570

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.

U.S. \$1.00 costs	1.3135/40	Canadian dollar
	1.7050/60	Deutsche marks
	1.9200/10	Dutch guilders
	1.5210/20	Swiss francs
	36.40/20	Belgian francs
	6.0400/00	French francs
	1626.5/8.0	Italian lire
	101.23/33	Japanese yen
	8.1450/65	Swedish crowns
	7.4250/45	Norwegian crowns
	7.0650/85	Danish crowns
One sterling	\$1.4610/20	
One ounce of gold	\$373.10/373.60	

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Khmer Rouge ask for talks as Phnom Penh mounts offensive

PHNOM PENH (Agencies) — The radical Khmer Rouge agreed to make concessions in exchange for talks with the government Tuesday, as word reached the Cambodian capital that the guerrillas were being pounded on the battlefield in a new offensive.

In a meeting that signalled a possible breakthrough in the Cambodian situation, a Khmer Rouge representative met a senior Cambodian government official and indicated the faction's willingness to drop previous demands.

The official, who demanded anonymity, told AFP that the Khmer Rouge were no longer sticking to their plan to ally their guerrillas to the newly unified Cambodian army under a separate command, and had indicated flexibility on their demand to be part of the coalition government.

Khmer Rouge nominal leader Khieu Samphan's request for an urgent roundtable discussion was read over their clandestine radio.

His letters to all Cambodian leaders asked for the meeting "in the interests of national reconciliation," the broadcast said.

The Khmer Rouge asked for the talks to be held on Aug. 22-25 — the dates that Cambodia's co-premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh and Hun Sen are scheduled to be on an official visit to Vietnam.

"The government is considering Khieu Samphan's proposal," government Information Minister Khieu Kanharith said.

At the same time, U.N. and Cambodian government officials confirmed that the offensive laun-

ched on Aug. 8 in central Kompong Thom was spread to north-west Siem Reap on Aug. 11 and was continuing into Banteay Meanchey and Battambang provinces.

"We want to show the DK (Democratic Kampuchea, or Khmer Rouge) that if they fight us, we are going to respond," Deputy Information Minister Ek Sereyuth said. "We want to avoid civil war. We mean to show we are strong... but the door is still open for them to negotiate."

Initially, the Kompong Thom offensive was in response to Khmer Rouge aggression around the embattled area of Stung, diplomats and Cambodian generals had said.

Heavy artillery barrages reportedly displaced 5,000 people from the area, diplomatic sources said.

Casualty tolls reported by the government appeared to be exaggerated — with 18 Khmer Rouge reported dead in Kompong Thom — but U.N. spokesman Eric Falt said they could not be confirmed independently.

U.N. peacekeepers have scaled down their patrols and their monitoring of ceasefire violations as they prepare to wind down the operation next month.

More offensives against the Khmer Rouge were expected in Battambang and Banteay Meanchey provinces in the coming days, one U.N. official who monitors military developments said.

"Their goal is to push the Khmer Rouge back as close

to the border as possible," the official said, comparing the scale of fighting to the last major push of the civil war in 1989.

Mr. Falt said officially that government forces "have been very active in several provinces over the past few days. It's very difficult to ascertain what territory they control at this time."

"We can confirm they're on the move," he said.

Talks last week between Khieu Samphan and Prince Ranariddh in Bangkok broke down when the radical leader maintained his demands that the prince's Royalist Party take full control over the Cambodian government, that the Khmer Rouge become part of the government and that it ally its guerrillas to the newly unified army while maintaining their independence.

Meanwhile, Khmer Rouge guerrillas have released eight ethnic Vietnamese child hostages after receiving \$750 ransom, U.N. officials said Tuesday.

The children were kidnapped Friday from the village of Chnok Tru in central Kompong Chhnang province, the site of two earlier Khmer Rouge attacks, the officials said.

About 30 guerrillas raided the village, abducted 11 Vietnamese settlers, including the eight children. One woman was later shot and another prisoner released, the officials said. The fate of an 80-year-old woman hostage was unknown.

The children, including a month-old baby, were released on Monday night after the kidnappers received the ransom

from the villagers.

"We have a verbal report from the village... the children were released last night (Monday) and a (\$750) ransom paid," one U.N. official told Reuters.

On March 24, eight Vietnamese settlers were murdered after 20 Khmer Rouge guerrillas raided the village.

Chnok Tru was attacked a second time on July 8 when the Khmer Rouge killed eight members of two Vietnamese families.

Vietnam invaded Cambodia in December 1978 to oust the Khmer Rouge whose brutal "killing fields" reign of terror led to the death of a million people by execution, starvation or disease.

Cambodia's two co-presidents will discuss the problem of stateless ethnic Vietnamese on the border during a three-day good-will visit to Vietnam later this month, a senior government official said Tuesday.

Their primary mission would be to ensure "good relations" with Cambodia's powerful eastern neighbour.

Problems regarding the citizenship rights of several thousand stateless Vietnamese currently gathered on the Vietnamese-Cambodian river-border would also be discussed, Mr. Sereyuth said.

About 3,000 Vietnamese boat people, many with identity papers issued by the old Hanoi-installed Phnom Penh government, are waiting at the Bassac River border checkpoint with Cambodia for permission to cross.

Actor Stewart Granger dies at 88

LOS ANGELES (R) — Actor Stewart Granger, who rose from movie extra to become one of the top leading men of Hollywood and British films in the 1940s and 1950s, has died at the age of 80.

Granger, star of such films as Scaramouche and King Solomon's Mines, died at St. John's Hospital and Health Centre in the Los Angeles suburb of Santa Monica after a long bout with cancer, said hospital spokesman Gary Miereanu said.

The British-born actor trained at the Webber-Douglas School of Dramatic Art and started his career in British films as an extra in 1933.

After gaining acting experience with a number of stage companies, he returned to the screen as a leading man in 1939 and became one of his country's top romantic actors and one of its biggest box-office draws in the 1940s.

His only true rival was British actor James Mason.

Granger soon attracted Hollywood's attention and in 1950, he signed with MGM Studios.

For the next seven years, he played heroic swashbucklers, safari hunters and a number of other macho roles in big-budget adventure films.

Granger starred in more than 60 movies, including King Solomon's Mines, Scaramouche, Harry Black and The Tiger and the 1952 remake of The Prisoner of Zenda.

Born James Lablache Stewart in London, Granger changed his name in the late 1930s to avoid



Actor Stewart Granger and his second wife actress Jean Simmons at the Hollywood premier of King Solomon's Mines on March 15, 1951. (AFP photo)

confusion with another up-and-coming Hollywood star, Jimmy Stewart.

Granger was married for a time to actress Jean Simmons and became a U.S. citizen in 1956.

With his film career in decline in the 1970s, Granger accepted roles on American television.

In 1991, he joined with Rex Harrison on Broadway in a revival of The Circle.

Granger is survived by a son and three daughters.

Schoolboy sends girlfriend death certificate

LA PLATA, Argentina (AFP) — A 17-year-old schoolboy frustrated by his girlfriend's rejection of his amorous advances obtained an official death certificate and sent it to her in her name, citing "frigidity" as the cause.

The secondary school student was ordered to appear before a local magistrate to face charges for threatening behaviour, authorities said. The girl's parents have filed suit in La Plata, the capital of Buenos Aires province, officials said.

China woman has taste for rubber

PEKING (R) — Health authorities in Taiyuan, Shanxi province, in central China have discovered a woman who likes the taste of rubber so much she has eaten more than 800 rubber nipples for baby feeding bottles since 1990.

The official Economic Evening News reported that the woman, in her mid-30s, developed a taste for rubber three years ago. "One day she chewed a rubber nipple to pieces and swallowed," the newspaper said in a report. After that, she ate more than 800 of them. Her brother likes to eat rubber bands, the paper added.

Peeping Tom cameraman earns cheerleader protest

TOKYO (R) — Organisers of a high school baseball tournament said Tuesday they were an apology from Japan's public television network after one of its cameramen filmed "low-angled" shots of mini-skirted cheerleaders. "It is inexcusable," said Naotaka Makino, chief organiser of the nationally-televised tournament, in a statement. While his network gave blanket live coverage to on-field events, the 29-year-old man took up position by a flight of steps below the cheerleaders, and pointed his home-video camera up their skirts, "focusing on the lower half of their bodies". Irish should study rock group U2 in college.

Drug swallowing smuggler bagged in Japan

TOKYO (R) — A New Zealander has been arrested in Japan after he was alleged to have smuggled drugs by swallowing huge quantities of marijuana, a customs official said Tuesday.

The official at Osaka International Airport in western Japan said construction engineer Kerry Mitchell, 37, was seized there on July 12 after he was alleged to have swallowed 755 grammes of the drug in 118 individual plastic packets. "It was amazing — the guy swallowed more than 700 grammes of marijuana in packets done up in plastic food wrap," said the official.

Polish cardinal attacks spread of 'sex propaganda'

WARSAW (R) — Poland's Roman Catholic primate, Cardinal Jozef Glemp, has attacked what he called a growth of sex propaganda and "sex mania" in the country. "Parish and synod circles must methodically and constantly work out how to rally society away from the euphoria of sex and limit the influence of sex mania," he told tens of thousands of people on an annual pilgrimage to Poland's holiest shrine, at the Jasna Gora Monastery in Czestochowa. Card. Glemp said books used for sex education in schools paid too much attention to technique and not enough to the love and affection involved in what he called "God's bounty".

Neglected female monkeys seek affection — report

TOKYO (R) — Most of the female monkeys in a Japanese zoo began having sex with each other after the chief male wore himself out battling younger rivals and lost the urge, a Tokyo daily said Tuesday. The Osaka Zoo found that, during the last breeding season between October and February, 13 of the 18 females aged four and above turned to each other for affection. This is apparently because the boss monkey was so worn out by fighting off young rivals he couldn't keep up the pace of mating," it quoted a zoo official as saying. Zoo officials were not immediately available for comment. The 17-year-old leader of the Osaka pack of Japanese monkeys had seen his grip on power slipping since last year as three younger monkeys mounted a growing challenge, the official told Mainichi. "I believe it's a temporary phenomenon seen when females get frustrated due to shortages of male partners." Masao Kawai, Professor emeritus at Kyoto University, was quoted as saying.

Clinton wants employers to pay more on insurance

TULSA, Oklahoma (R) — President Bill Clinton, confronting the next big item on his agenda, health care reform, wants U.S. employers to pay the lion's share of workers' insurance — and is drawing fire from Republicans.

Mr. Clinton tested the waters for some details of his health care reform plan in a speech Monday to the National Governors Association, a grouping of the governors of the 50 states.

The cost of the plan was not disclosed — Mr. Clinton will have to reveal this when he unveils the package officially next month.

Republican Governor Carroll Campbell of South Carolina said he believed it would cost \$60 to \$100 billion a year.

Wary of seeking an income tax increase after already raising taxes by \$241 billion over five years to reduce the budget deficit, Mr. Clinton and senior White House officials made clear that the cost would be put on employers.

"We're not looking to increase taxes right now," other than taxes on alcohol and cigarettes to pay for long-term health care, said senior health care adviser Ira Magaziner.

He told reporters that under Mr. Clinton's plan, employers would pay 80 per cent of their employees' insurance and the workers themselves 20 per cent.

Many employers currently pay for varying percentages of their workers' insurance but small businesses often cannot afford it. When this happens, workers either pay for their own at great expense or go without.

Mr. Clinton would take \$30 to \$40 billion a year in projected savings from current government insurance programmes for the poor and elderly, Medicare and Medicaid, and other tax savings, "using it as a subsidy to offset the cost of insurance to small businesses."

Low-income people, who make up a large part of America's nearly 40 million uninsured individuals, would benefit from these savings.

Republican Governor Pete Wilson of California said Mr. Clinton would meet resistance if he proposed mandated payments by employers. He said such a burden on small businesses would force them to lay off workers, cutting off a source of many of the new jobs created in America.

"I think there are too many Democratic, as well as Republican, governors who will hear from their small business community that they simply cannot afford a mandated system," he said.

Mr. Clinton considers reform of the U.S. health care system essential for restoring economic growth. Like his budget plan that squeaked past Congress two weeks ago, it will be a source of long debate.

Senior White House officials have acknowledged that it is likely to be a year before a health care reform package can wind its way through Congress and get to a vote.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Buthelezi blasts OAU, India and Uganda

LUSAKA (AFP) — South African Zulu leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi has accused India and Uganda of fuelling political violence in South Africa by training the armed wing of his rivals in the African National Congress (ANC). Speaking at the Lusaka Press Club, the visiting leader of the KwaZulu tribal homeland and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) late Monday charged that some Organisation of African Unity (OAU) members were supplying arms to the ANC. "The OAU has betrayed the aspirations of many South Africans. Its members are supplying arms to ANC cadres at a time when the fight is moving to the negotiating table. 'What is the OAU doing? The arms used to kill our people in South Africa are getting into our country through its members including Zambia," Mr. Buthelezi charged. "Uganda is training thousands of ANC cadres to kill our people," Mr. Buthelezi said.

2 S. Korean ex-presidents questioned

SEOUL (R) — Anti-corruption investigators have turned the spotlight on two former South Korean presidents, asking them about possible impropriety during their terms in office. A government spokesman said Tuesday. Questionnaires were sent to former President Chun Doo Hwan Monday and to his successor, Roh Tae-Woo, Tuesday, the Board of Audit and Inspection (BAI) said. The BAI, controlled directly by the president's office, wants to probe Mr. Chun's role in the multi-party dollar "peace dam" controversy and Mr. Roh's role in a multi-billion dollar contract for air force fighter jets.

Taiwan president tries to halt party split

TAIPEI (R) — Taiwan President Lee Teng-Hui intervened to avert another split in his ruling Nationalist Party Tuesday by pushing through a key internal reform demanded by party rebels.

Mr. Lee, who is also party chairman, made an unscheduled appearance before about 1,500 delegates at the party's 14th congress to persuade them to approve a motion creating the post of vice-chairman. The congress, which had rejected the motion earlier in the day during a stormy session in which delegates screamed insults and came to blows, passed it by acclamation after Mr. Lee's appeal. Hundreds of dissident delegates, who wanted to use the vice-chairmanship as a power base, had threatened a walk-out if the reform was blocked. "I believe future party chairmen will take into consideration party unity and harmony as well as domestic political stability when nominating their vice-chairmen," Mr. Lee told delegates.

S. Africa to give up Namibian toe-hold

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Democracy negotiators including the government and the African National Congress (ANC) resolved Monday to hand over Walvis Bay enclave, South Africa's last toe-hold in neighbouring Namibia, as soon as possible.

A government delegation led by Foreign Minister Pik Botha buckled to pressure from Nelson Mandela's ANC and other opposition groups to transfer Walvis Bay and several islands to Namibia's black government. Negotiators voted to endorse the incorporation of Walvis Bay into Namibia and resolved: "To request the South African and Namibian governments to meet on an urgent basis to finalise the outstanding matters in order for incorporation of Walvis Bay and the offshore islands into Namibia to take place at the earliest opportunity."

China, U.K. end talks on Hong Kong

PEKING (AFP) — China and Britain are to resume talks on expanding democracy in Hong Kong in early September after a ninth round ended here Tuesday with no signs of any breakthrough in the long-running row. Britain's chief negotiator Ambassador McLaren said after the negotiations that "we have got through quite a lot of work in this round" but refused to talk in terms of progress. He told journalists he would return to London Wednesday for official discussions, but rejected suggestions they would be at cabinet level. The 10th round of talks is to take place on Sept. 4 and 5, the British embassy said.

Foreigner pulled out of Thai hotel rubble

BANGKOK (AFP) — The corpse of a Caucasian man has been pulled out of the rubble of a collapsed hotel in northeastern Thailand, officials at the rescue centre said Tuesday. The dead man could not be identified as no identification could be found near his body, which had been damaged beyond recognition, said the officials, contacted by telephone in Nakhon Ratchasima, 260 kilometres (160 miles) northeast of here. He was found late Monday night, pinned between two giant concrete boulders. The man's face was crushed. He was the third foreigner confirmed dead in Nakhon Ratchasima's Royal Plaza Hotel disaster. The death toll rose to 102 Tuesday. The hotel collapsed Friday morning, burying hundreds of guests and employees under piles of concrete and twisted steel. The two other foreigners confirmed dead are a British woman, Janet Mawdsley, and a U.S. Air Force officer, Master-Sergeant Ramon D. Canda, a Filipino American.

Troop pullback restarts in Abkhazia

MOSCOW (AFP) — Georgian and Abkhazian authorities announced Tuesday that they have resumed withdrawing their front-line forces from the north of the Abkhazian capital Sukhumi, the agencies Interfax and ITAR-TASS reported.

The news that the withdrawal was to restart at midnight (2000 GMT Monday) came after Georgian and Abkhazian forces partially suspended their retreat from the area amid mutual accusations of violating a disengagement accord.

Meanwhile the tripartite commission in Sochi, southern Russia, set up to oversee the accord in the breakaway region of Abkhazia, put back the planned timetable for three days, according to a statement from the Abkhazian representative in Moscow.

The delay until Aug. 20 will enable the terms of a ceasefire agreement signed at the end of July to be respected. The agreement came after more than a year of fighting and foresees a simultaneous retreat of all troops in the areas of conflict.

It also allows for the deployment of an intervention force and the restoration in Sukhumi of the legal authorities chased from power last year by Georgian troops.

On Sunday Abkhazian leader Vladislav Ardzinba ordered a halt to the departure from Abkhazian territorial of volunteers from other parts of the Caucasus in southern Russia, accusing the Georgian troops of delaying their withdrawal.

Under the terms of the timetable the volunteers who account for about a third of the armed units fighting with Abkhazian separatists were to have left the territory known as the Western front along the Gumista River north of Sukhumi by Monday.

U.N. takes issue with charges of waste, fraud

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Some criticism of the U.N. bureaucracy by a British Sunday newspaper was erroneous but other complaints were justified, a U.N. spokesman said, promising a more detailed response to specific charges at a later date.

He was commenting on an investigation by the London Sunday Times which charged the United Nations with about \$400 million a year through mismanagement and corruption and had suppressed a report detailing the extent of financial abuse. The charges quoted in the Times were widely reported by other news media.

"There are a number of things in it (the newspaper) which are just completely wrong, which are erroneous," the U.N. spokesman said.

He cited criticism by someone whom the newspaper identified as a former U.N. assistant secretary-general who had actually been a United States assistant secretary of state.

The spokesman also took issue with a charge that U.N. facilities reflected a lavish lifestyle. The contract with a catering firm which ran the main U.N. restaurant required it to pay its own way and there was absolutely no cost to the United Nations, he said.

Addressing criticism that some former staff members who drew a pension were also paid consultancy fees, he said that since the organisation did not have enough qualified experts for a growing number of missions, retired senior personnel were sometimes hired to carry out specific tasks.

"I really don't see anything terribly wrong about this," the spokesman said.

But he added: "There are the things in the article which I happen to feel are quite legitimate. Any time you have a very large bureaucracy, you are going to have abuses, you are going to have problems with mismanagement. Regrettably, you will always have problems with fraud."

He agreed the U.N. Human Rights Yearbook, current only up to 1986, "should be published on a more timely basis."

He also said the United Nations observed too many special "decades and years and official celebrations and what have you." But such observances were decided by the General Assembly, comprising representatives of all member states, and not by the U.N. secretariat, he stressed.

The newspaper article failed to note that "a lot of things that are done at the U.N. are done as a result of decisions of member states," he added.

The spokesman also denied that the United Nations ignored a highly critical report submitted earlier this year by the then-U.N. under secretary-general for administration and management, former U.S. Attorney-General Dick Thornburgh.

The newspaper said the report — never circulated as a public U.N. document though widely leaked last March — had been "suppressed and later shredded."

Denying it had been "deep-sixed" (buried), the U.N. spokesman said: "Every aspect of that

U.N. fears for thousands of Muslims trapped in Mostar

SARAJEVO (R) — U.N. officials said Tuesday they were increasingly concerned by the plight of up to 35,000 Muslims trapped with little food or water in the disputed southwest Bosnian city of Mostar.

They are ready to consider air dropping relief supplies, as a last resort to save lives.

No aid convoys have reached the eastern part of the city for two months.

In Geneva, Bosnia's warring leaders got down negotiations on a future ethnic division, after a preliminary accord to make the capital Sarajevo a U.N.-controlled open city in the early stages of an overall settlement.

Bosnia's Muslim President Alija Izetbegovic met Serb leader Radovan Karadzic for talks which U.N. officials said would focus on the future of Muslim enclaves in eastern Bosnia.

And the UNHCR aid agency said in Geneva that firm offers from abroad to treat sick and wounded Bosnians almost doubled overnight to 1250. This was

enough to organise evacuations from towns across Bosnia.

Concern here focused on Mostar, Bosnia's second city. Muslims, crowded into the old town area have been under attack from Bosnian Serbs for the past year and are now being shelled and fired on by Bosnian Croats, their former allies in the 16-month-old war.

"We have been negotiating for access for six weeks. They have very little to eat," said a United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees spokesman Tuesday.

He said that if all else fails, the U.N. would resort to air drops to try to get supplies into eastern Mostar. But this would be a last, desperate resort as air drops are extremely difficult to target. The heavy packages cannot be dropped directly onto the city itself.

The Belgrade-based news agency Tanjug reported Tuesday that Bosnian Croat forces had launched a fresh heavy artillery attack against government forces south of Mostar.

Assured of hospital beds

abroad for urgent cases, the UNHCR faces tremendous problems in getting patients out of cities like Mostar, which are cut off by fighting.

UNHCR spokesman Ron Redmond told British television that future evacuees may be transported out of Bosnia via Sarajevo.

Bosnian leaders entering a second day of peace talks in Geneva were set to discuss Bosnia's disputed towns and cities after agreement in principle to turn Sarajevo into a demilitarised zone under U.N. control.

United Nations Protection Force spokesman Barry Frewer sparked a row with Bosnia's Muslim-led government Monday when he said the Serbs had relaxed their grip on the city to the point where it could no longer be called a siege.

Vice President Ejup Ganic accused Major Frewer of siding with the rebel Serbs and asked the U.N. to remove him from Bosnia.

'Japan had secret plan to destroy Australia with a rat attack'

SYDNEY (AFP) — Japan had a secret wartime plan to destroy Australia with a rat attack, according to a report published here Tuesday.

The Sydney Morning Herald quoted recently discovered Japanese military documents detailing some of Imperial Army Unit 731's activities.

The rats were to have been carrying fleas infected with diseases such as bubonic plague ("black death"), cholera and typhoid developed by the infamous unit, according to the Herald report from Tokyo.

The documents were said to have been released Monday by a group of Japanese revisionist historians including Professor Hirofumi Hayashi of Kanto University.

They show the unit's commander, Lieutenant Shiro Ishii, was ordered to ensure the plague bacteria could remain viable for a month so that it could be shipped to Sydney, Melbourne or Hawaii.

Prof. Hayashi said the plan was probably to release the flea-bearing rats in the cities.

More than 3,000 Chinese, Korean and Mongolian civilians were said to have died after being deliberately infected with the diseases and subjected to other experiments at the unit's biological warfare centre at Harbin in Manchuria, the report said.

In another incident, several hundred people died in an epidemic started during a series of trials attacks using plague-infected fleas against Chinese civilian targets in Hunan province, in Ningbo and Jinhu, the

report said.

A later attack along the Zhegan Railway backfired when Japanese troops blundered into an infected area and 1,700 of them died of plague, dysentery and cholera.

Another attack aimed at Saipan was foiled when a submarine armed with plague-filled torpedoes was sunk.

The deadly bacilli was also to have been used against Samoa, Guam and the Bataan peninsula in the Philippines.

Queensland University international relations and Asia expert Glen Barclay said Tuesday there has long been speculation based on pieces of evidence about Japan's fixation with chemical warfare experiments during World War II.

Brazil still confident of keeping World Cup record

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — Brazil's players are confident they can keep the country's proud record of taking part in every World Cup finals after their 1-1 draw in Uruguay.

"With the last four matches in Brazil, I am sure we can guarantee our place at the World Cup," said midfielder Mauro Silva, following Sunday's bruising encounter in Montevideo.

"We'll be looking to get at least seven points out of the last eight. It won't be easy but we will do it," commented trainer Carlos Alberto Parreira.

Since the World Cup began in 1930, Brazil are the only country to have taken part in all 14 final tournaments, winning the World Cup in 1958, 1962 and 1970.

Bolivia lead South America Group B with eight points. Brazil, Uruguay and Ecuador are all level on four points, but Brazil have the enormous advantage of playing all their remaining matches at home.

Brazil's qualification looked in doubt three weeks ago after they lost in Bolivia, which may have caused some jitters among the World Cup Organising Committee.

Their next match is against Ecuador Sunday in Sao Paulo. Three of Bolivia's last four games are away which will reveal how much the group leaders have owed their impressive performances to the advantage of playing in La Paz 3,700 metres above sea level.



Brazil's Bebeto (left) looks on as Uruguay's Daniel Sanchez (right) kicks the ball in an acrobatic position during their World Cup qualification match (AFP photo)

Brazil's players were at last given some praise at home for their performance in Montevideo, although most of it was for their determination rather than traditional Brazilian skill. Full back Jorginho, defender Marcio Santos and midfielder Dunga were all acclaimed but team captain Rai, despite scoring Brazil's goal, was still uncharacteristically slow and missed two crucial second half chances.

But the result was not enough for coach Carlos

Alberto Parreira to endear himself entirely to Brazilian fans.

As the delegation arrived at Montevideo airport to catch their flight home, they were greeted by a group of Brazilians waving banners with the words "get out, Parreira."

Uruguay, having already dropped a point at home to Ecuador and lost to Bolivia, were left on the point of elimination and trainer Luis Cubilla's job is now hanging by a thread.

Milan face up to life without Dutch stars Van Basten, Lentini recovering

ROME (R) — AC Milan must face up to life without the trio of Dutchmen who made them famous the world over as they begin their bid for a third successive Italian title.

Rud Gullit is seeking fresh glory with domestic rivals Sampdoria while Frank Rijkaard has turned his back on the stresses of the Italian game and returned to Ajax Amsterdam.

Only striker Marco Van Basten remains of the trinity which helped Milan conquer Italy and Europe. But he faces a grim and lonely struggle for fitness after two ankle operations in the past eight months.

"We have to accept that there aren't other Gullits and Rijkaards in circulation," Milan coach Fabio Capello said, admitting their departure would change the face of his squad.

"They are two great players who have a place in Milan's history but we betide us should we try to find mirror images of them," he added in an interview with daily La Repubblica.

"A coach is like a wine-maker: he must produce the best wine with the grapes he has available."

Milan experienced a bitter-sweet end to last season, defeat by Marseille in the European Cup final preventing them from fully savouring their Italian title triumph.

Long seen as the world's top team, things had begun to turn sour at home as they won just one of their final 12 league matches after posting a record 58-game unbeaten run over two seasons.

Capello must now re-motivate a club seeking to become the first since Torino in the 1940s to win three successive Italian titles. Swift revenge in Europe is also a priority.

Milan still have six foreign players on their books but their two new signings lack the lustre of the departed Dutchmen.

Danish midfielder-cum-winger Brian Laudrup is on loan from relegated Fiorentina while inconsistent Romanian striker Florian Raduciu has moved from Brescia, another club that went down.

Both face a tough battle for a first team berth.

The Milan coach has a squad of more than 25 players to pick from but that could prove as much a handicap as a help with so many egos to be brushed.

The jumbo squad is made necessary in part by the number of friendlies Milan play, games lapped up by the television channels which club president Silvio Berlusconi controls.

But the huge number of players could not prevent the Milan squad from looking increasingly world-weary as it limped over the finishing line last June.

The work load is already beginning to take its toll after an all too brief summer break.

Defender Christian Panucci, an expensive close-season signing designed to inject some youth into an ageing defence, will miss the first few weeks with a knee injury sustained in a friendly.

Milan will also be without the talents of winger Gianluigi Lentini for the next few months as he recovers from a car crash.

European Footballer of the Year Van Basten has refused to set a date for his return to action, having played briefly last May before frustratingly requiring fresh surgery.

1st Division Basketball Championship

Ahli, Orthodoxi to clash today in 1st round final

By Aileen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Kingdom's all-time basketball rivals, Al Ahli and Al Orthodoxi, meet again Wednesday evening in the final match of the first round of the 1993 First Division Basketball Championship organised by the Jordan Basketball Federation (JBF).

By press time Tuesday evening it was not clear however if the scheduled match would actually take place as Al Orthodoxi was in protest of a recent JBF decision regarding their coach and player Murad Barakat.

After a recent under-14 boys match, both Al Orthodoxi coach Barakat and Al Ahli coach Yassir Qunash were suspended by the JBF for the entire 1993 season for unsportsmanlike conduct during their match.

Al Orthodoxi Tuesday threatened to boycott the match unless the decision was reversed, although informed sources told the Jordan Times that the JBF had actually repealed their decision and opted for a final warning of both coaches.

JBF officials were unavailable for comment. Since this year's competition began in early August, both teams have displayed a strong form, easily overcoming all their opponents despite the fact that they had a mere 7 weeks to rest since the 1992 championship was decided after a 6 month postponement from January to June.

1992 champions Al Ahli and runners-up Al Orthodoxi are now tied with 12 points in the overall standings after maintaining an unbeaten streak.

Al Ahli who are now in first place on score difference beat Al Orthodoxi in four of their five clashes during the past six months. They have a more coherent team with a full lineup of experienced as well as promising young players.

They beat newcomers Al Ashrafiah and Al Wifaq 112-43 and 85-21; Al Watani 86-29; Al Hussein 95-54; Al Jalil 92-60 and Al Jazireh 128-66.

On the other hand, Al Orthodoxi, now depending on younger, less experienced players coached by key player Murad Barakat, succeeded in scoring big wins hoping to be prepared to face Al Ahli and avert the humiliating results that cost them the 1992 title.

During the past two weeks Al Orthodoxi beat Al Wifaq 95-48; Al Hussein 78-63; Al Jazireh 97-67; Al Ashrafiah 150-68; Al Watani 105-63 and Al Jalil 90-71.

Al Jazireh are in third place after disposing of the usual third place holders Al Jalil 91-79. They also beat Al Hussein 87-62 and Al Watani 79-60.

Al Jalil are in fourth place after losing to Al Jazireh and scoring a big win of 100-46 over Al Hussein, while Al Watani are now in fifth place after managing a hard-fought 80-78 upset of Al Hussein in double overtime.

Standings prior to Wednesday's match

Team	P	W	L	PF	SA	Pts
Ahli	6	6	—	598	273	12
Orthodoxi	6	6	—	615	382	12
Jazireh	7	5	2	593	516	12
Jalil	7	4	3	593	464	11
Watani	7	3	4	467	530	10
Hussein	7	2	5	502	541	9
Ashrafiah	7	1	6	347	669	8
Wifaq	7	—	7	299	633	7

Ex-minister detained in Marseille soccer scandal

PARIS (AP) — Investigators of the Olympique Marseille soccer payoff scandal Tuesday detained the chief of staff of a member of parliament, who denied a gas station receipt discredited his story.

In an interview on French radio, socialist lawmaker and former cabinet minister Jacques Mellick pleaded that "this service station affair" be put to an end.

News of the credit card receipt, which surfaced Monday night and exploded across front pages Tuesday, "was from a station in the northern French town of Bethune around the time Mellick says he met with Marseille owner and fellow lawmaker Bernard Tapie."

"That card, it is available to members of my cabinet and my direct co-workers who don't have a card," Mellick, who is also Bethune's mayor, said in an interview on France-Info Radio. "It's not my cafe, it's not my chauffeur."

Tapie contends he met with Mellick on the afternoon of June 17 and denies having seen former Valenciennes coach Boro Primorac, who claims Tapie offered him incentives to take the blame in the soccer payoff scandal.

The detention of Mellick aide Christophe Lapeyre for questioning and the storm over the receipt were the latest in an affair that has dominated the media, angered loyalists and amused critics of Tapie and his team amid the summer vacation doldrums.

"Mellick: L'alibi au tapis" (the alibi on the carpet) read a huge headline on the newspaper France-Soir, using a wordplay.

World Athletics Championships Ottey, Lewis have new goals

STUTTGART (AFP) — Merlene Ottey and Carl Lewis shook off the disappointment of their 100 metres defeats and set themselves new goals at the World Athletic Championships Tuesday.

"I've put the 100 mentally to one side," the Jamaican said after her 200m heat. "I'm concentrating on the 200."

However, she could not resist a dig at the International Amateur Athletic Federation which today changed the times of Monday's 100m final, crediting both Ottey and Gail Devers with 10.82sec.

Last night, after two hours of argument in the committee room, officials rejected a Jamaican protest and declared Devers the winner in 10.81sec.

There was a similar situation at last year's Olympics when the American had to wait while officials studied the photo-finish before giving her the verdict over another Jamaican, Juliet Cuthbert.

"I know I won that race," Ottey said. "I didn't want a Mercedes, I only wanted a gold medal." In 13 years of high-level competition the 33-year-old has won 10 bronze medals.

The IAAF persuaded the German car firm to give each winner a Mercedes.

Lewis, 32, would have given his prize away if he had won although he said today he had not seriously imagined he could beat Linford Christie.

"We analysed the mistakes we made in the 100 and I'm pretty optimistic. I realise I have a chance to run a great 200," he said after running the fastest 200m heat of 20.45, looking round at his opponents three times as he eased up.

The American has only one 200m gold medal out of 16 in his World Championship and Olympic collection.

That success came in the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, although he was not allowed to compete because he was under 21.

Christie has pulled out of the 200m, ostensibly with a sore throat, although British team officials would not say if there had been a repetition of the celebrations which followed his



U.S. sprinter Gail Devers (right) and Jamaica's Merlene Ottey (left) dip for the finish line of the women's 100 metres final at the World Athletics Championships (AFP photo)

100m triumph in the European Championships here in 1986.

"It doesn't change anything for me that Christie withdrew. I'm forgetting the 100 and now focusing on the 200," Lewis said.

Jackie Joyner-Kersey dug herself out of a deep hole in her attempt to reclaim the world heptathlon title.

She walked smiling out of the pit after jumping 7.04m with her last attempt to extend her narrow lead after five events.

"I'm a little bit happier than I was yesterday but there's a long way to go," said the 31-year-old who followed up her worst high jump in nine years yesterday with a very mediocre shot put.

She led Svetlana Buraga of Belarus, by 31 points and Ger-

many's Sabine Braun by 80.

Russia's Galina Malchugina was fastest in the women's 200m heats ahead of Marie-Jose Percec of France.

Olympic champion Gwen Torrence of the United States was third fastest while Taiwan's Hui-Cen Wang enjoyed a rare win over Russia's Irina Privalova.

Ottey was eighth fastest but none of the favourites were going all-out at these early stages.

China's Min Chunfeng, 1991 Asian champion, had the third longest throw in the women's discus qualifying.

Her 63.56m was just short of German favourite like Wyludna's 64.06m and Cuban Olympic champion Maritza Marten's 63.66m.

USOC trying to help Bosnia athletes

COLORADO SPRINGS (R) — In an effort to rescue a generation of Bosnian athletes, the U.S. Olympic Committee said Monday it was trying to bring 30 of them to the United States where they can train for the Olympics.

Sixteen tennis players, aged 13-19, 13 swimmers and one speed skater would be brought to the United States under the "Save the Athletes of Bosnia Project."

"The idea is to save a generation of athletes in Bosnia," said Harvey Schiller, executive director of the U.S. Olympic Committee, or USOC.

"This is our way of trying to help the athletes of this war zone to continue training and to keep the important aspect of sport alive in their country," he said in a statement issued by the committee.

The athletes are beginning to request visas from U.S. consulates and the USOC has notified the State Department about the requests, said USOC spokesman Bob Condon.

Predrag Medjeski, executive director of the Olympic Committee of Bosnia and Herzegovina, asked for help from National Olympic committees of the world to help with 242 athletes in 15 sports.

The USOC said funds for the athletes would come from outside contributors and not from the USOC athlete support programmes and general budget.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
AND TANNAN HIRSH
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BRIDGE WITH A LATIN BEAT

North-South vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH		EAST	
♠ A 8 8	♠ Q 3	♠ 7 5 3 2	♠ K J
♥ J 6 2	♥ 9 8 3	♥ 7 5	♥ Q 8 3
♦ Q 10 7 4	♦ A J 9 8 5	♦ K 6	♦ A J 9 8 5
♣ A 10 4	♣ K 8 3	♣ K 8 3	♣ 5 2

West's top-of-nothing lead of the seven of spades revealed the location of the spade honors. Declarer captured East's jack with the king and led a low diamond. West rose with the king and had one last gasp. A diamond continuation to East's jack and a low diamond back would have forced declarer to take an anti-percentage play in clubs to land the game. But West persevered with a spade, and declarer guessed right by putting up the ace to get the good news—the queen came toppling down.

Declarer drew trumps in three rounds, ending in hand, and led a diamond to the ten. That lost to the jack, but declarer claimed the contract. If East returned a club, declarer would lose only one trick in the suit. If East exited with a low diamond, declarer would discard a club and either the queen of diamonds would score an immediate trick or be established for another club discard with the ace of clubs as an entry to dummy. Either way, declarer could lose only three tricks in the minor suits.

Opening lead: Seven of ♠. Brazil is the major force in South American bridge. The team is led by the mercurial Gabriel Chagas, and his flair for the unexpected tends to overshadow the exceptional abilities of his fellow team members. His partner, Marcelo Branco, starred on this hand from the Brazil-Canada match at the recent World Bridge Olympiad.

North's one-no-trump response was forcing and Hirsch's rebid of two clubs did not promise more than a

Gascoigne worries Lazio

ROME (R) — England and Lazio midfielder Paul Gascoigne is "overweight" after a leisurely summer and will be only 70 per cent fit when the season starts, according to a report in Corriere dello Sport newspaper Tuesday.

The report said Lazio coach Dino Zoff was rapidly losing patience with the man supposed to be the team's inspiration.

The talented but erratic Gascoigne arrived for pre-season training five kilos (11 lbs) overweight and has looked well below his best as Lazio have struggled in a series of friendlies against quality foreign opposition. The club also suggested to him that he should trim the length of his new hairstyle in which shoulder-length extensions were added to his own hair.

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PLAZA

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U.S. said planning to put Sudan on 'terrorism' list

Reports implicate Sudanese diplomats in New York bombing conspiracy

Combined agency dispatches

WASHINGTON — Secretary of State Warren Christopher was preparing to place Sudan on the U.S. list of states accused of sponsoring terrorism and an announcement could come as soon as Wednesday, U.S. officials said Tuesday.

The United States increasingly has been concerned about Sudan's ties to Iran and radical groups and this is to be the basis of Mr. Christopher's decision, the officials told Reuters.

"But the determination also comes after an ABC television report on Monday that U.S. intelligence officials believe top government officials of Sudan were involved in a plot earlier this year to blow up the United Nations, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) headquarters and two tunnels in New York."

Mr. Christopher is "expected to make an announcement about his decision within a matter of days," a State Department official said. Another official, who declined to be identified, said Mr. Christopher was "preparing to conduct the necessary notification of foreign governments and members of Congress" that Sudan has been placed on the terrorism list.

A taped conversation between the alleged ringleader of the plot and an informant points to Sudanese diplomats as accomplices, ABC said.

The conversation has convinced U.S. officials to put Sudan on Washington's list of terrorist states, the New York Times reported Tuesday. That means Sudan would not receive military equipment and other non-

humanitarian assistance from the United States, and Americans who trade with Sudan would have to certify that material sold has no military use.

ABC News said Monday that the Sudanese government was involved in the foiled plot.

Sudan's alleged operatives in New York City were two men working for the Sudanese mission to the world body, ABC said, citing U.S. intelligence sources. It identified the two diplomats as Siraj Yousef, the counselor to the Sudanese mission, and Ahmad Mohammad, the third secretary.

In a telephone interview from his Manhattan home, Mr. Yousef told the Associated Press that "everything mentioned by ABC News is absolutely erroneous and untrue."

"Ahmad Mohammad and I are not intelligence officers," Mr. Yousef said, adding that he has never been questioned in the case by U.S. authorities.

Federal agents monitoring the Sudanese learned that when the ambassador, Ahmad Suliman, heard of the plot, he confronted Mr. Yousef, the network said.

But when Mr. Suliman contacted Hassan Turabi, the leader of the National Islamic Front, Sudan's ruling party, ABC said Dr. Turabi told the ambassador "to mind his own business."

ABC said there was no evidence that Mr. Suliman knew of the plot.

U.N. security sources have said in the past that investigators were looking into the possible involvement of employees at the mission. New reports have mentioned Sudanese diplomats but have not given names.

ABC quoted the U.S. sources as saying they believed the two men allegedly intelligence officers for the Sudanese government — helped five other Sudanese who have been indicted in the conspiracy to bomb four New York sites, including the Lincoln and Holland tunnels and a federal office building housing the FBI.

The five Sudanese were among 11 suspects arrested in June, which was uncovered in 2000 with the help of a government informant. Some were allegedly loyal to Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman, whose followers also have been implicated in the World Trade Centre bombing.

ABC quoted from transcripts it obtained of taped conversations between the government informant, Emad Salem, and Siddiq Ibrahim Siddiq Ali, the alleged ringleader of the plot.

It quoted Mr. Salem as saying that "the brothers who are in the Sudanese embassy, are they going to be with us?"

Mr. Siddiq Ali, who is Sudanese, replied, "God willing, yes. ... There is someone who is going to help me. High-level man."

At another point, the two men discuss getting weapons from the Sudan.

Mr. Yousef told the AP that he knows Mr. Siddiq Ali, but only as a member of the Sudanese community in New York.

In the plot to bomb the United Nations, according to ABC, the Sudanese diplomats were to help get the suspects into a garage under the building by supplying them with diplomatic plates to pass security. When the task was complete, the mission would help them escape.



FEW CHOICES: Three photographers take pictures of two-year-old Melissa Barinac, as she sleeps at the Kosovo Hospital in Sarajevo. The Bosnian infant reportedly has a tumor and needs to be evacuated in order to have access to medical scanners (AFP photo)

PLO to gradually elevate negotiators as top officials

By Suleiman Al Khalidi
Reuters

AMMAN — The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) plans to appoint some Palestinian negotiators to the Palestine Central Council (PCC) as the next step towards persuading Israel to talk directly with people it recognises as PLO leaders, a council member said on Tuesday.

Some members of the Palestinian team to peace talks with Israel will also join the Palestine National Council (PNC), the Palestinian parliament-in-exile, Saleh Ra'afat told Reuters.

Last week the PLO appointed seven of the negotiators to a PLO committee which sets Palestinian strategy in the peace talks.

Israel says it will keep talking to them but insists this does not amount to direct negotiations with the PLO itself.

The negotiators are all from the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip while the PLO is dominated by Palestinians who have been in exile for most of the time since the creation of Israel.

The PCC has about 100 members and meets about twice a year to set policy when the PNC, a much larger body, is not in session. The PLO's 15-man Executive Committee runs the organisation's day-to-day affairs.

Mr. Ra'afat said the aim of the new appointments would be "further integrating the peace team within the structures of the

organisation as PLO officials... then pushing for elevating the talks to bring the Israeli government to the stage of negotiating on the table with senior PLO officials."

"The coming steps, we believe, will open the door to direct negotiations in which the negotiators concerned would be the direct decision-makers — the PLO Executive Committee and the Israeli government," he added.

Israel has gradually eased a ban on contacts with the PLO in the 13 months since Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin defeated the hard-line Likud party of Yitzhak Shamir in elections.

But Israeli politicians and analysts say Israel will go the whole way only in return for concessions in the peace talks.

Mr. Ra'afat said direct talks could speed up the peace process.

"We are approaching the time when we have to take hard decisions which necessitate negotiating at the highest level," he said. "The low level of representation so far will only mean the process cannot advance."

Some PLO officials said giving the negotiators new PLO positions would also reduce their room for manoeuvre, make them more accountable to PLO headquarters in Tunis and erode their status as independent leaders in the occupied territories.

Israel has repeatedly tried to encourage a Palestinian leadership in the occupied territories

independent of the PLO. In Cairo, PLO official Nabil Shaath said the changes in Israeli policy towards the PLO already amounted to implicit recognition of the organisation.

"Every day there is a movement, a step towards a full recognition," he told Reuters.

Dr. Shaath repeated the PLO position that Jericho could not take the place of East Jerusalem as the capital of an independent Palestinian state.

He said a Palestinian proposal that Israel withdraw first from both the Gaza Strip and Jericho was meant to build confidence while maintaining the link between the two areas, which are not connected geographically.

"We don't want to fragment the Palestinian territories... (but) we do not accept that it (Jericho) will be a substitute to East Jerusalem as a base. This will not happen," he added.

"We do not accept a withdrawal from Gaza first. This is not enough, we want a demonstration on the West Bank, particularly Jericho, because it will be a demonstration of unity and integration between the West Bank and Gaza," he added.

"Jericho is the only West Bank town... on the border with Jordan. It is the only town in the West Bank which is free of (Israeli) settlements. It is an ideal and a symbol of the West Bank's integration with Gaza," he said.

Israeli minister says Gaza settlements should not exist

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel's labour minister has questioned the right of Jewish settlements in the occupied Gaza Strip to exist if they must rely on poorly paid Arab workers, the ministry said on Tuesday.

It was the latest in a series of government comments that have aroused settler ire. About 2,500 Jews live in isolated sprawling settlements at the margins of the densely-populated strip.

"If the Gush (the Gaza Strip settlement bloc) was founded such that it would exist on cheap labour from Gaza, this places a big question mark on its right to exist," spokesman Zvi Rosen quoted minister Ora Namir as saying.

Mr. Namir was responding to the settlers' sacking of 330 Jewish workers after a government wage subsidy expired last month.

Enraged settlers have charged in recent weeks that comments by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and other ministers are delegitimising the settlers' movement.

Mr. Rabin, contradicting claims by right-wing nationalists that settlement enhances security, said on Sunday settlers got in the way of the army trying to protect Israelis.

Government support for a speedier enactment of limited Palestinian self-rule in Gaza has settlers worried about their own fate.

Mr. Rozen said Namir had asked the army to bar Palestinian workers from entering the settlements to take the place of the sacked Jews.

The temporary wage supports were instituted after a wave of attacks on Gaza settlers, many of whom were stabbed by Palestinian employees.

Settlers who earn their living from subsidised hothouse farms have said they cannot continue to employ Jewish workers without the wage supports.

The 120,000 Jews living among nearly two million Palestinians in Gaza and the occupied West Bank have been the most vocal opponents of Mr. Rabin's declared willingness to trade some land occupied in 1967 for peace with Arabs.

COLUMN

U.S. representative falls down shaft on Swiss hotel roof

WASHINGTON (AFP) — U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor fell down a shaft on a hotel roof in Geneva where he was vacationing and injured his back, his spokeswoman said. Mr. Kantor, who left Washington after concluding intense negotiations on the North American Free Trade Agreement, plunged three metres (12 feet) down an air conditioning vent while watching fireworks. "It's so bizarre and it's just a shame," said Dianne Wildman, Mr. Kantor's press officer. "Clearly he wanted to go and relax and then this happens." Mr. Kantor was released from a Geneva Hospital where he was treated for a vertebra injury he sustained when he went to look for a chair while on the roof of the Hotel Metropole in Geneva. Ms. Wildman said Mr. Kantor planned to finish his two-week vacation in Italy.

Mid-air gun alert proves to be unfounded

LONDON (R) — A misunderstanding between a passenger and a member of the crew of a Continental Airlines Boeing 747 led to a mid-air gun alert over the North Atlantic Tuesday. A spokesman for Continental Airlines said earlier reports that a passenger had produced a gun on board a flight from Houston, Texas, to London's Gatwick Airport had proved to be a false alarm. There had been a "communications problem" between a crew member and a passenger and there was no one on board with a gun, he said. The spokesman had no further details and did not elaborate. The Jumbo Jet, with 323 passengers and 10 crew, was due to land at 0830 GMT, airport sources said.

Kidnapped executive released after 12 days

NEW YORK (R) — The owner of a New York men's clothing company was kidnapped and held for 12 days before he was released from a manhole near the Manhattan West Side Expressway, police said. Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly told a news conference that ransom money had been recovered and two men were under arrest in the kidnapping. Harvey Weinstein, 68, had been missing since Aug. 4 and was kidnapped for a \$3 million ransom, Mr. Kelly said. Mr. Weinstein is chairman of West Mill Clothes Co., which does business as the Lord West Tuxedo Co. The Queens, New York-based company is one of the largest tuxedo rental and sales companies in the country, a company spokeswoman said. Mr. Weinstein was found by police at 2 p.m. (1800 GMT) under a manhole cover just off the Henry Hudson Parkway. He was very grimy when he was pulled out, but he apparently was unharmed by his ordeal.

59 doctors to supervise separation of twins

WHEATFIELD, Ind. (AP) — Siamese twins who share a liver and deformed heart will be moved to a Philadelphia hospital where a team of 59 doctors will supervise surgery to separate them, their father said. The children's hospital in Philadelphia has agreed to take the case and the twins likely will be moved by Wednesday, Kenneth Lakeberg told the Times of Munster. At a benefit Sunday to help defray medical bills, Mr. Lakeberg asked for the nation's "prayers that this goes through." Doctors have given Amy and Angela, born June 29, less than 1 per cent chance for even one of them to survive the surgery, expected to take place within the next five to seven days. The twins now are being treated at Loyola University Medical Centre in nearby Chicago.

2 Belgian tourists robbed by fake police

NAY, France (AFP) — A Belgian couple handed over 7,000 francs (\$1,200) to thieves posing as traffic policemen in southwest France, police said. The robbers, in plain clothes but driving a car with a flashing light, stopped the tourists' camper-van on a minor road, near Nay, and asked to inspect their papers. They threatened to take them to the police station unless they were paid. The couple, unfamiliar with French traffic law, gave up all their cash.

Financial scandal puts Rabin on shaky ground

TEL AVIV (AP) — Seeking to avoid a crisis that could derail the Middle East peace talks, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin Tuesday rejected demands to suspend a deputy minister accused of diverting state funds.

The religious Shas party has threatened to withdraw from Mr. Rabin's coalition over the case involving Raphael Pincasi, a party leader and deputy minister of religious affairs. That would leave Mr. Rabin with a parliamentary minority and could force new elections.

Mr. Rabin's view, according to government sources, came in response to a supreme court appeal by an Israeli clean government league seeking to unseat Pincasi pending his trial. The court is scheduled to hear the case Wednesday.

Mr. Rabin's written reply said that Israeli law does not require suspending a deputy minister from his post to face charges, the sources said on condition of anonymity. They said Mr. Rabin noted the charges did not involve personal gain.

The prime minister's reported opinion contradicted that of Israel's Attorney General Yosef Harish, who recommended suspending Mr. Pincasi, a government source said. Mr. Rabin's letter will be included in the attorney general's official reply to the court, he added.

A draft of a charge sheet

against Mr. Pincasi accuses him of misappropriating money and falsifying documents in connection with funding for Shas. The violations were committed under the former Likud government headed by Yitzhak Shamir.

The case against Mr. Pincasi could be a matter of survival for Mr. Rabin's ruling coalition. Shas, a Hebrew acronym for Torah Guardians, a Sephardic religious party, holds crucial six seats in the 64-member coalition.

Without Shas, Mr. Rabin could only hold on to power based on outside support from Arab legislators. This would deprive him of the Jewish majority Mr. Rabin says he needs to make significant concessions such as yielding land for peace with the Arabs.

The battle over Mr. Pincasi is a precursor to a more significant fight expected next week, when the court hears an appeal to suspend another Shas leader, Interior Minister Aryeh Deri.

Mr. Deri has been under investigation for three years on allegations of fraud. Mr. Rabin has backed Mr. Deri's hesitation to step down.

Some analysts believe Shas may remain in the government even if Mr. Pincasi and Mr. Deri were ousted. But Mr. Deri is a key disciple of Shas' mentor, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, a proponent of the peace talks. Some analysts have speculated that the party would whither without him.

Babangida offers to resign, but will not say if he will

LAGOS (AP) — General Ibrahim Babangida told lawmakers on Tuesday that he has offered to resign as president and commander in chief, but the mercurial ruler cryptically refused to say whether he would actually step down.

In a much-anticipated address, Gen. Babangida said he made his resignation offer to his top officers, whose ultimate decision likely will be based on what Gen. Babangida himself wants to do.

"Following lengthy deliberations with my service chiefs, I offered as my own personal sacrifice to voluntarily step aside as president and commander in chief of the armed forces of the federal republic of Nigeria," he told a special joint session of both houses of the National Assembly.

But he would not say if his officers made a decision or when it would be made. Gen. Babangida sought to frame the crisis that he triggered as a triumphant test of national unity.

"We have put in our best, we have had sleepless nights. There have been periods of joy, sadness and frustration," he said. "In all these our countrymen have showed understanding."

Gen. Babangida's military coterie is divided on whether Gen. Babangida should resign as chief of the army and name himself civilian president, or choose a

figurehead civilian to run his interim government.

Nigeria has been politically paralysed since Gen. Babangida, who has ruled since 1985, voided the June 12 presidential election that was to return the nation to civilian rule.

He has since said Nigeria will be ruled by an interim government made up of civilians and soldiers, but has not said whether he will step down on Aug. 27, his long-promised deadline for democracy.

Gen. Babangida said he will announce "in the next few days" who were not asked to accept or reject his resignation offer.

The speech was typical Babangida: Ambiguous, short on details and replete with promises that the situation would soon be clarified.

The political crisis has heightened regional, religious and ethnic tension in this nation of 90 million people, triggering three days of riots that killed more than 100 people in Lagos last month and a general strike last week that shut the city down for three days.

Gen. Babangida has repeatedly reneged on promises to return the nation to democracy. Nigeria has been ruled by soldiers for the past decade and all but 10 of its 33 years of independence from Britain.

Turks bomb Kurdish strongholds

ANKARA (Agencies) — Turkish warplanes and helicopter gunships bombed Kurdish guerrillas on eastern mountain peaks Tuesday, causing heavy casualties, a security official said.

Unal Erkan, emergency rule governor of 10 provinces in the east and southeast, said the bombing resumed after a one-day lull in air strikes begun on Friday against rebels roaming high country around Semdinli near the Iraqi and Iranian borders.

He told Anatolia news agency that the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) had taken big losses, but said he would not give casualty figures until troops had searched the rough terrain.

Local officials said many scores of PKK fighters had died but exact numbers were hard to determine in the Buzuldeg mountains, up to 3,000 metres above sea level.

A Turkish summer offensive against the PKK is in full swing in the southeast, where more than 6,900 people have been killed since the guerrillas launched their separatist war in 1984.

In Brussels, another Kurdish rebel movement warned that its militants were planning attacks on popular tourist sites in Turkey, and that tourist lives were at risk.

The National Liberation Front of Kurdistan (NLKF) said at a press conference that Kurdish separatists were planning to attack such popular tourist destinations as Anatolia, Izmir, Bodrum and even central Istanbul.

Front spokesman Kani Yilmaz said: "Our warning covers all tourist sites. Kurds in tourist areas are going to carry out actions there. Turkish tourist zones are war zones. Do not go there."

The front is linked to the PKK. In Bonn, relatives of two German tourists reported to have been kidnapped by PKK rebels in eastern Turkey say the men were on holiday in the country, the German foreign ministry said Tuesday.

German authorities have so far been unable to confirm the kidnapping of the two men, named by the Duesseldorf-based Kurdbah news agency as Albrecht Christoph Lehmann and Henry Butler.

Kurd-ha, which has close ties to PKK reported Sunday that PKK guerrillas had seized the two Germans and a New Zealander in the Serhat region, the Kurdish name for the Kars-Agri region near the Armenian and Iranian borders.

The families of the two Germans were unable to say where the men had intended to go in Turkey. The foreign ministry said the German embassy in Ankara was continuing to press for information.

U.S. group slams Kuwaiti decision to outlaw committee defending human rights

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A New York-based human rights organisation has denounced a Kuwaiti government decision to outlaw voluntary groups as an outright blow to human rights in the emirate and called on the U.S. government to use its influence to reverse the move.

While the Aug. 12 Kuwaiti decision did not target human rights groups per se, the scope of the move covered the Kuwaiti Association to Defend War Victims (KADWV), which had not been given legal recognition by the government.

By extension, the abolition of the committee implies that Jordanian efforts to reverse death sentences passed on Jordanian citizens in Kuwait are also set back since the panel was one of the groups actively trying to help those on the death row.

According to the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, the Kuwaiti government was "embarrassed" by the KADWV's "accurate reporting and energetic international advocacy" on behalf of some 800 former residents of Kuwait who remain missing after the 1991 allied war which liberated the emirate from a seven-month occupation.

The Kuwaiti government charges that Iraq is holding the missing. Baghdad has rejected the charge.

The KADWV did not challenge the Kuwaiti government's assertion, but its "activism contrasted with the government's efforts to exploit the issue for political purposes and its discredited misrepresentation of the number of missing Kuwaitis," said the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights in a statement sent to the Jordan Times.

The KADWV was formed shortly after the liberation of Kuwait with the declared objective of assisting victims of

the war and their families and to promote and protect human rights in the emirate, which witnessed a post-liberation frenzy of vengeful rampage by Kuwaitis against non-Kuwaiti Arabs who remained in the emirate throughout the Iraqi occupation.

Hundreds of Jordanians and Palestinians were killed or disappeared in the rampage.

Some of the missing later turned out to have been detained and tortured by the security forces. They were put on trial and sentenced to death or long terms in prison on charges of collaborating with the Iraqis. Some of them remain in detention pending trial at the state security court.

Najjar Ghanem, a senior official of the KADWV and head of the Kuwaiti chapter of Amnesty International, the London-based international human rights organisation, visited Jordan at least three times to follow up on cases of Jordanians and Palestinians detained in Kuwait.

During his last visit, Mr. Ghanem assured the Jordan chapter of the Arab Organisation for Human Rights and families of those on the death row in Kuwait that his group would exert all efforts to ensure that the death penalties are not carried out and that all the accused are given fair trials.

The Lawyers Committee for Human Rights said: "The KADWV has not been afraid to criticise the government for the widespread abuse of human rights suffered by non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait in the months after the Iraqi occupation. The KADWV has proved to itself to be a true advocate of the rule of law and equal justice in post-war Kuwait."

The Kuwaiti group had applied for registration in 1991, but the government did not reply to it. Under Kuwaiti laws, if the government does not reply to such applications, then the concerned applicants are considered illegal, the

lawyers committee said.

It said a group of Kuwaiti residents Saturday staged a demonstration in Kuwait City to protest the de facto dissolution of the KADWV.

The Kuwaiti government's decision to ban "illegal" groups was not reported in the media until Tuesday. The Aug. 15 account of the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights was the first report on the affair.

The KADWV Tuesday refused the government order to close down and asked parliament for help. It accused the government of "arbitrariness."

It placed newspaper advertisement reiterating its refusal to close, saying its work was too important to stop.

"We will proceed with our work because we believe in it and we are obliged to do it. We will not compromise," the advertisement addressed to parliament said.

The first (parliament) represent the top popular authority and you have the constitutional tools and channels to stop the government arbitrariness," it said.

The Lawyers Committee for Human Rights noted that the Kuwaiti committee had also come under fire in the Kuwaiti press because of the help it extended to a Lebanese family which suffered severe atrocities at Kuwaiti hands and attracted massive international media coverage.

The Farhat family lost its head and a son, and a daughter, Naimat Farhat, was raped and shot in the head. The woman, who survived the attack, went back to Kuwait last month to identify her assailant, believed to be a senior Ministry of Interior official, after heavy pressure was brought upon the Kuwaiti government to open the case.

The KADWV helped the Farhats build their case and pressure the Kuwaiti government, according to Naim Farhat, the woman's brother who lives in San Jose, California.

"This trial is significant," said the lawyers committee, "because it is the first prosecution of a Kuwaiti government official to arise out of the violations committed in the months after the Iraqi occupation."

The Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, which visited post-war Kuwait at least three times to report on the human rights situation there, "explores the government's decision to close down 'unlicensed' public associations," the statement said.

"This is an attempt to put an end to independent human rights advocacy in Kuwait," said Neil Hicks, coordinator of the lawyers committee's Middle East programme. "If it is allowed to succeed, it will signal a return to authoritarian government in Kuwait. Without independent groups like the Kuwaiti Association to Defend War Victims, no one is going to raise vital human rights issues which remain unresolved at this time."

The lawyers called on the Kuwaiti government "to grant legal recognition to the KADWV and cooperate with its work on behalf of Kuwaitis missing in Iraq, and on general domestic human rights issues in Kuwait."

"The committee is calling on the U.S. government to use its influence to encourage the Kuwaiti government to cooperate with independent non-governmental groups to create a pluralistic society in which fundamental rights are respected," it said.

The Lawyers Committee for Human Rights is known for its work to promote international human rights and refugee law in the U.S. and abroad since 1978.

The group describes its work as "impartial, holding each government to the standards affirmed in the international bill of human rights."

The committee is chaired by Marvin Frankel while Michael Posner serves as its executive director and Arthur Helton as director of its refugee project.